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The Atlantic Monthly

DECEMBER 1998

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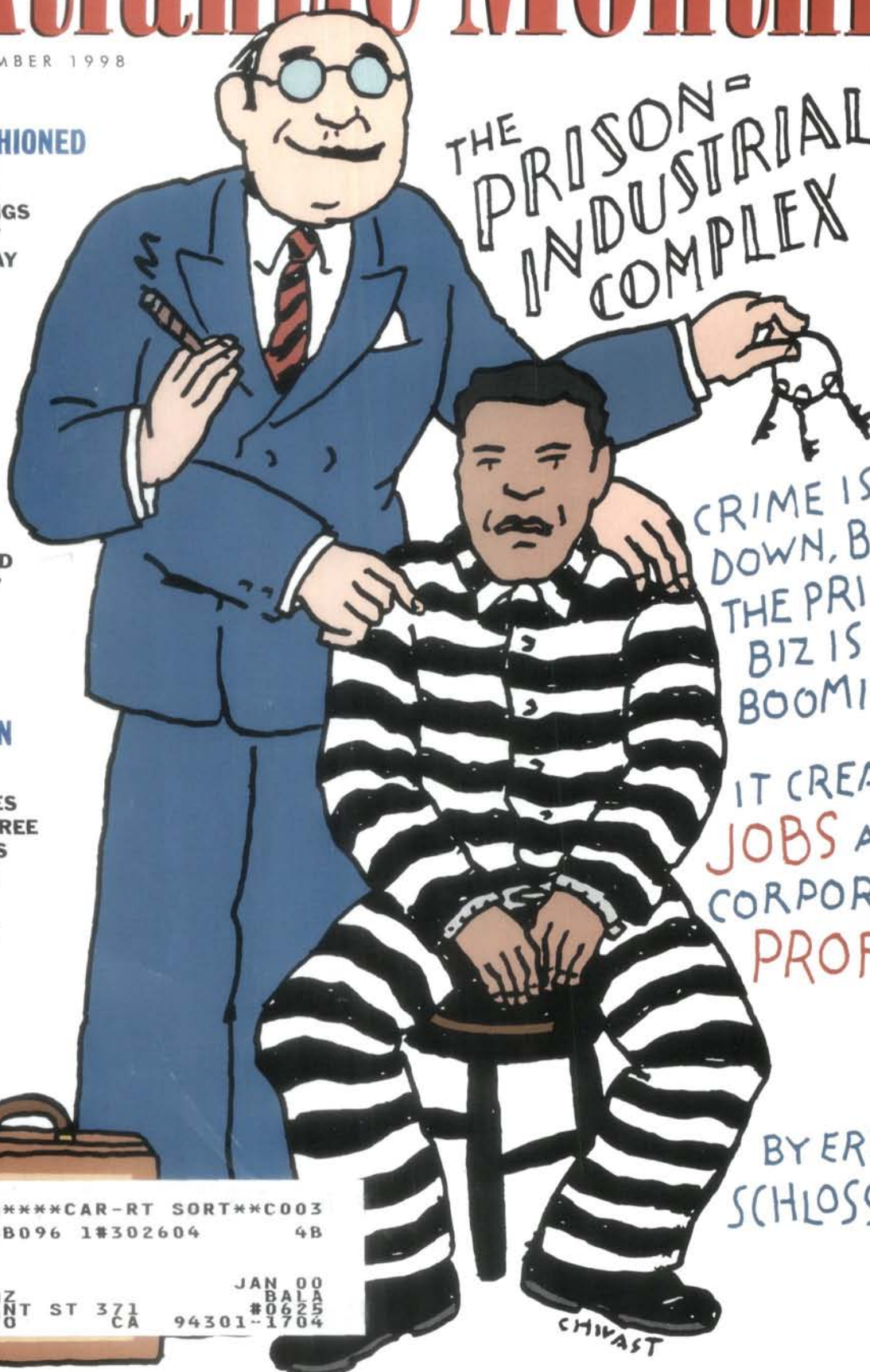
STEPHEN
DIANSKY

THE PRISON-
INDUSTRIAL
COMPLEX

CRIME IS
DOWN, BUT
THE PRISON
BIZ IS
BOOMING—

IT CREATES
JOBS AND
CORPORATE
PROFITS

BY ERIC
SCHLOSSER



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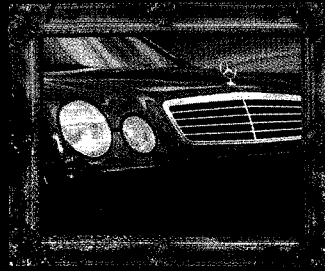
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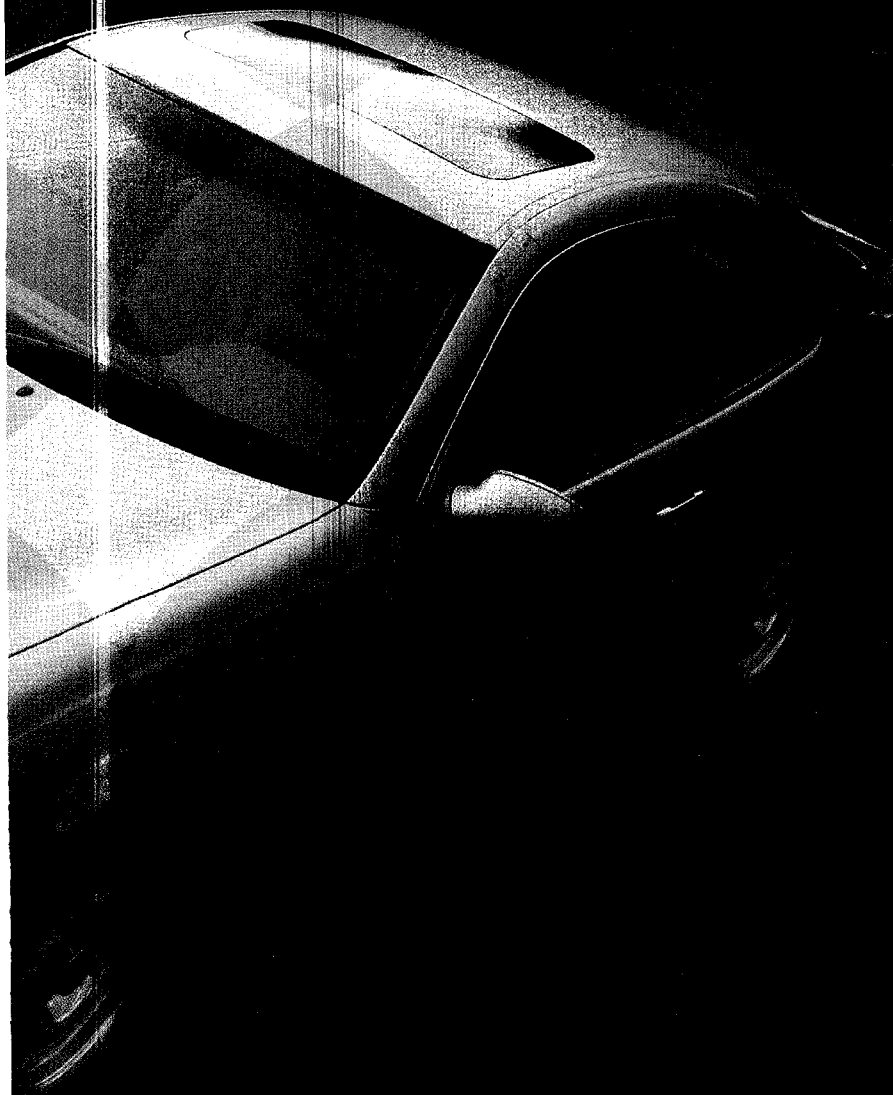
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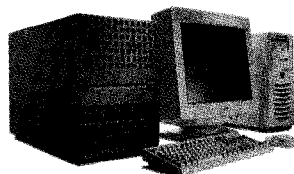
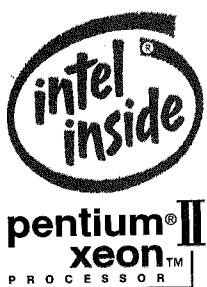
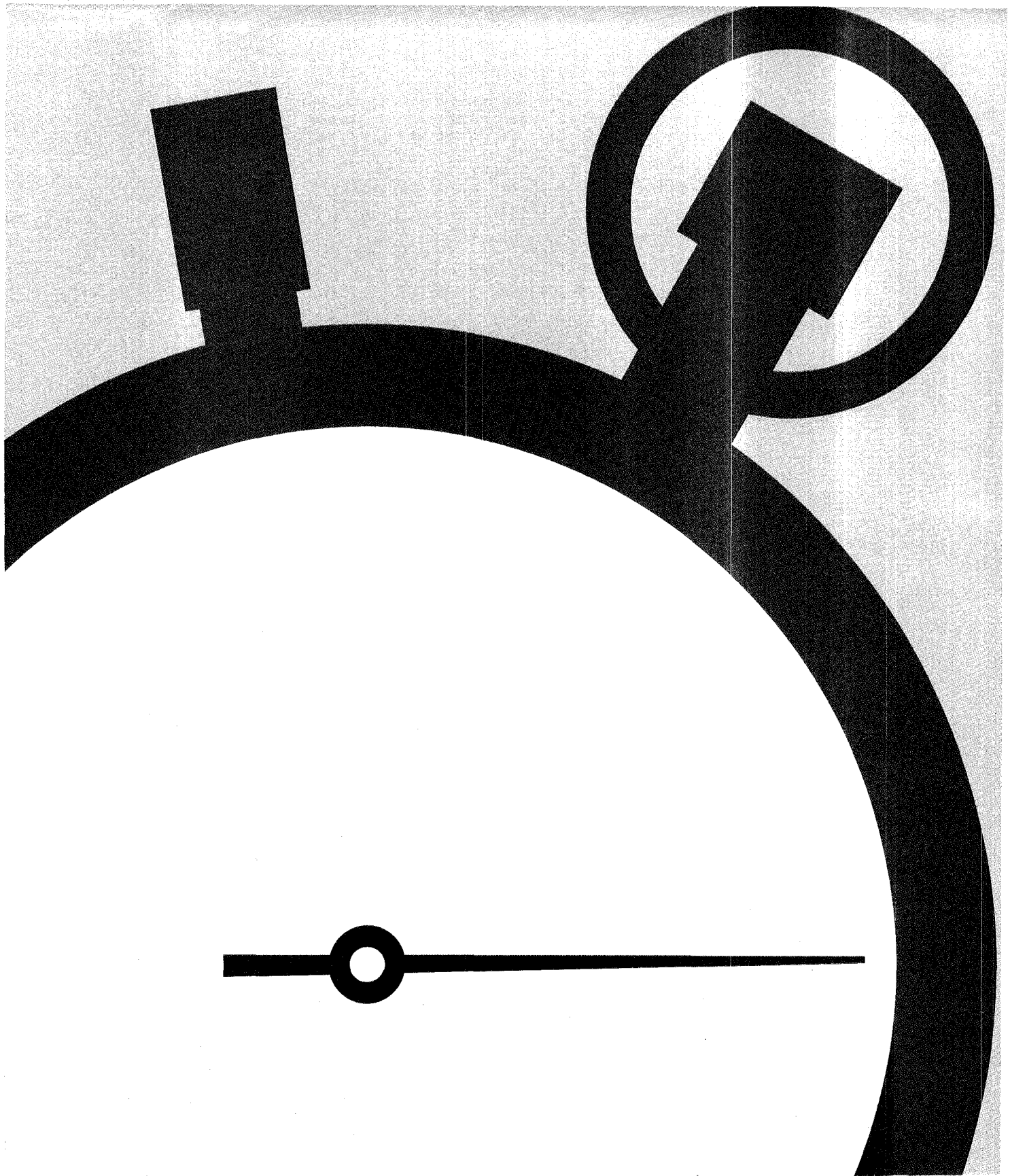
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It's time for clarity.



Page 98



Page 85



Page 44

REPORTS

26 Notes & Comment: Back to Basics

Some of the steps toward a more satisfying political life may be surprisingly simple.

by Cullen Murphy

30 Personal File: Neshering

The intimate jumble of a shared taxicab ride in Israel. "We have put our trust in him," the author writes of a typical Neshher Company cabbie. "Here in the Middle East that is no trivial act."

by Edith Pearlman

32 Foreign Affairs: Hoods Against Democrats

"Within twenty-four hours of crossing into Bulgaria by train from Romania," the author recalls, "I began hearing two words over and over again: 'wrestlers' and 'groupings.'" Both of these terms refer to a new type of crime syndicate that is operating in the former Communist world.

by Robert D. Kaplan

FICTION & POETRY

92 Invention

A poem
by Billy Collins

51 The Prison-Industrial Complex

The number of Americans behind bars is now larger than the prison population in all of China—and it continues to grow, even as violent crime rates fall. The economies of whole regions have been skewed toward incarceration, and the job of incarceration is increasingly being handed over to private companies. America's prison-industrial complex, the author argues, is rapidly corrupting the criminal-justice system.

by Eric Schlosser

80 Lost in Translation

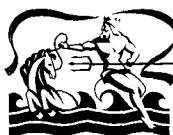
"A penny, which becomes secured, is an acquired penny"—behold the metamorphosis of one familiar saying, after a computer-aided excursion from English into German and back. But computer programs that can translate are actually getting to be quite good.

by Stephen Budiansky

85 America's Maginot Line

The development of ballistic missiles that any country can obtain threatens to make America's military presence in Asia untenable.

by Paul Bracken



94 Today Is Sunday

A short story
by Peter Ho Davies

96 Crepe Myrtles

A poem
by Cathy Smith Bowers

BOOKS

106 Dirty Hands

Our Own Backyard: The United States in Central America, 1977-1992, by William M. LeoGrande

by Benjamin Schwarz

116 Brief Reviews

by Phoebe-Lou Adams

ARTS & LEISURE

44 Travel: An Old-fashioned Christmas

Savoring the holiday season in Salzburg and Vienna.

by Corby Kummer

98 Music: Mahler's Unfinished Symphony

We can now hear several versions of Mahler's Tenth, a work that should at last be recognized as among the composer's greatest.

by William H. Youngren

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

8 77 North Washington Street/Contributors

12 Letters

24 The December Almanac

119 The Puzzler

by Emily Cox and
Henry Rathvon

120 Word Watch

by Anne H. Soukhanov

Cover art by Seymour Chwast



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77 NORTH WASHINGTON STREET

ANDREW Lichtenstein, whose work appears in Eric Schlosser's cover story, "The Prison-Industrial Complex," has had his film seized only twice during the three years he has spent taking photographs in and around America's prisons: once when prison officials saw him recording the use of force, and once after he took a picture of a homosexual couple. For the most part, Lichtenstein explains, prisons are not the dangerous environment for a photographer that one might expect; working on crime-ridden streets can be far more unpredictable. What turned out to be the most frightening aspect of the work came as a surprise. "The truly oppressive aspect of prisons," he says, "is the sense of claustrophobia—the desire to leave almost from the very moment you enter. It is like being under water, and you want nothing more than to fight your way to the surface."

Lichtenstein, thirty-three, is a native of New York City who was reared in the Boston area, graduated from Sarah Lawrence in 1988, and lives in Brooklyn. His first major assignment was for the black New York newspaper *The City Sun* (now defunct), whose managing editor, Utrice Leid, sent



SYGMA

Lichtenstein to Haiti to cover the election that produced Jean-Bertrand Aristide as Haiti's President. Lichtenstein remembers an extraordinary act of faith by the newspaper's publisher, who fished \$500 in hundred-dollar bills out of his pocket to bankroll the trip by this as yet untested photographer. Lichtenstein's interest in prisons was kindled when he

shot a series of photographs of prisoners on death row for the German newspaper *Die Zeit*. It developed further through the encouragement of MaryAnne Golon, the director of photography of *U.S. News & World Report*. During the year that Eric Schlosser spent researching his article, he and Lichtenstein visited a number of prisons together.

"Andrew is intense and idealistic," Schlosser says, "and he has come to regard America's burgeoning prison industry as one of the great undercovered stories of our time. Even lacking assignments, Andrew set out, as a matter of obligation, to record this phenomenon." Lichtenstein's prison photographs have been published in *U.S. News*, *The Village Voice*, and *Aperture*. Lichtenstein plans to continue documenting the growing links between the prison system and corporate America. —THE EDITORS

CONTRIBUTORS

Cathy Smith Bowers ("Crepe Myrtles") is poet in residence at Queens College, in Charlotte, North Carolina. She is the author of *The Love That Ended Yesterday in Texas* (1992) and *Traveling in Time of Danger*, to be published this month.

Paul Bracken ("America's Maginot Line") is a professor of management and political science at Yale University. He is the author of *Fire in the East: The Rise of Middle Eastern and Asian Military Power and the Decline of Western Dominance*, to be published early next year.

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Robert D. Kaplan ("Hoods Against Democrats") is a contributing editor of *The Atlantic*. His *Atlantic* cover stories for last July and August appeared, in somewhat different form, in his book *An Empire Wilderness: Travels Into America's Future*, published last summer.

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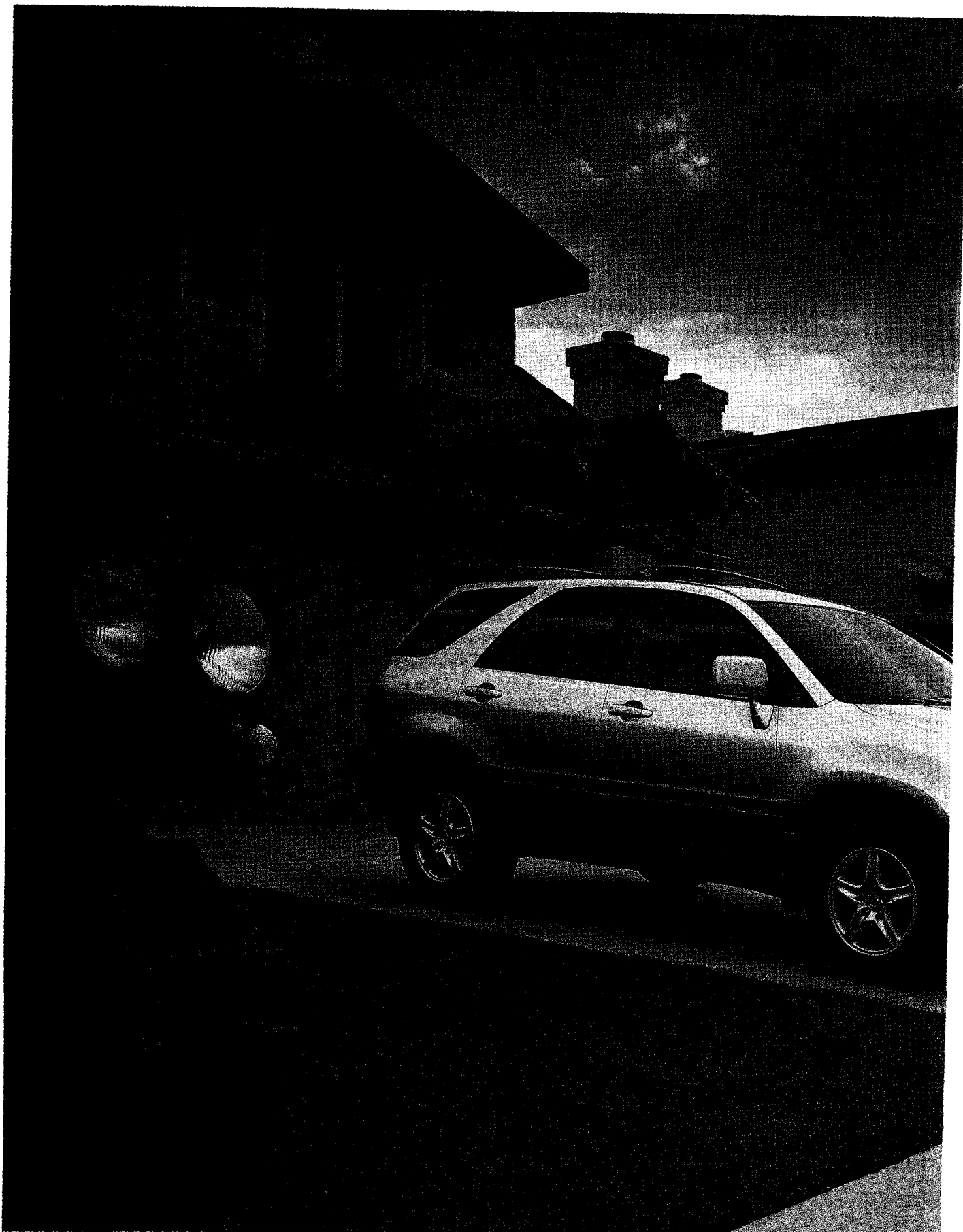
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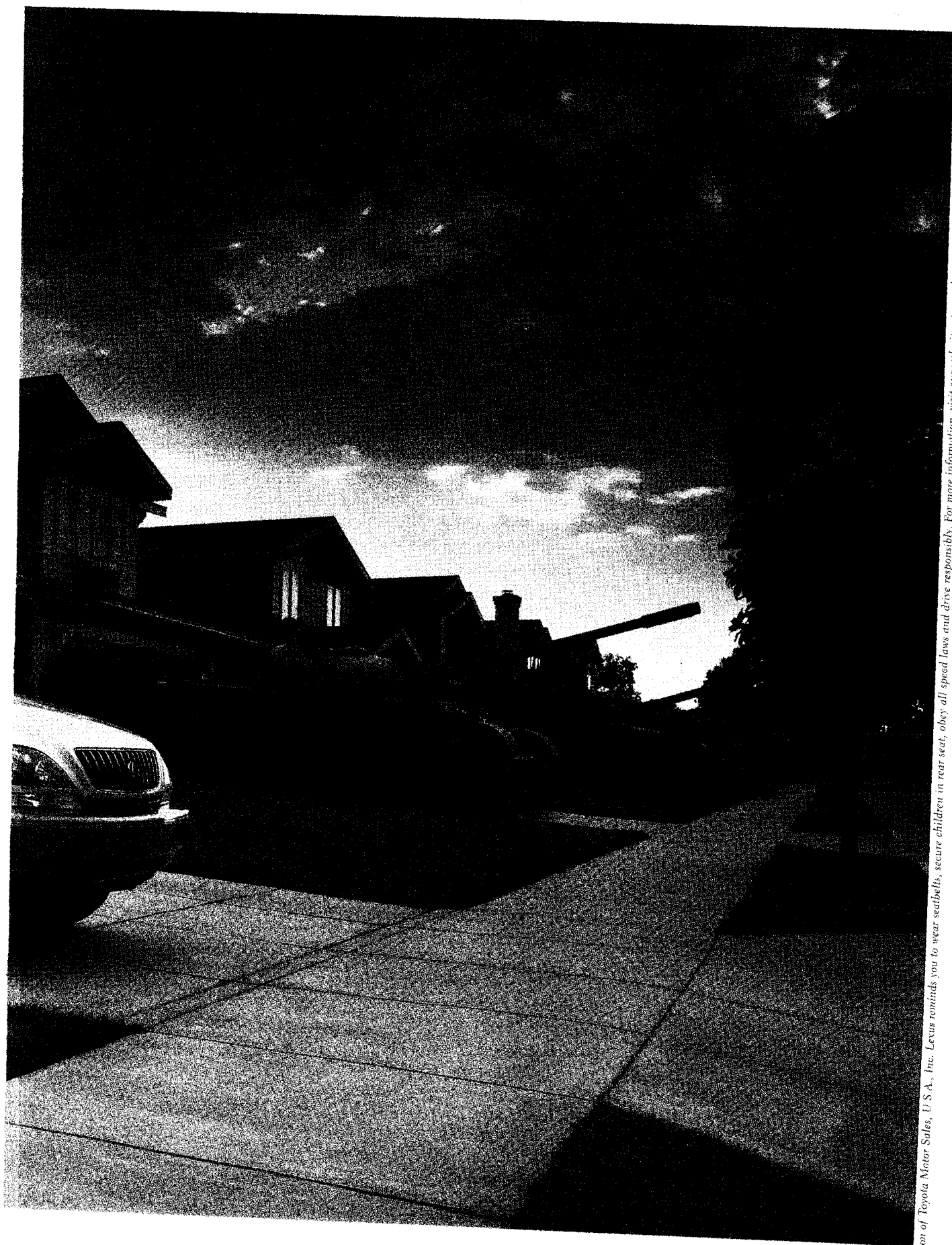
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LETTERS

Copyrighting Ideas

Charles C. Mann's article on the emerging pushes and pulls on copyright law ("Who Will Own Your Next Good Idea?," September *Atlantic*), with its oh-so-moving James Brown story, ignores one crucial particular. The owners of most U.S. copyrights are not struggling creative artists and software writers, or even the estates of deceased creative workers, but corporations. Some of them acquire these rights by publishing the work in question. Today most publishers are owned by corporate conglomerates that put the rest of their time, energy, and capital into petroleum, railroads, real estate, and other heavy-duty money-making.

The other path to corporate ownership of creative work is one that at least until recently had no counterpart in more civilized countries—the "work made for hire." If an employee in the United States creates something even remotely related to his or her job, under U.S. law the copyright to that work belongs to the employer. Some of the more egregious "copyright-violation" cases recently in the courts involved disputes between the "owners" of such works and their actual creators. Usually the creators lost.

So copyright utopians like Stallman and Barlow, although they may not have figured out all the answers for the struggling creator trying to survive, are at least asking the right questions.

Marian Henriquez Neudel
Chicago, Ill.

Does the Internet really undermine copyright protection by making infringers ubiquitous? I don't think so. Copyright laws have never been aimed at people passing a work on to their friends. They've been aimed at economic infringement. A wholesale pirate on the Internet is going to have to advertise!

A good Internet search will turn up

the pirates in a few minutes. Anyone who wants to protect his work can do it and prosecute the offenders. I can't tell you how many times I've clicked on a site and found it shut down because it contained unauthorized copyrighted works. If there's any change, it's in favor of us copyright holders. We never had search engines before.

Stephen D. Froikin
Chicago, Ill.

Charles Mann fails to mention one of the worst attributes of the attempt to extend the copyright monopoly: we no longer require copyright notices.

Most communications are not commercial in nature. The author writes them not for pay but because he desires to communicate his thoughts to others. The letters in this column are examples. In general this is true of most of our communications: Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech, the millions of "public" messages on the Internet, the recall letter about my car, my brother's family newsletter, the campaign flyers stuffed in my door.

Yet in an overextension of protection of those seeking economic gain, all this is now "copyrighted." We no longer require the author to put a copyright notice on the work. In regard to copying and the dissemination of speech we have reached the point where "that which is not expressly permitted is prohibited." It is a sorry, indefensible state of affairs in a country that has long held free discourse as a core value. Copyright's purpose was to encourage that discourse, not reduce it.

John H. Lederer
Oregon, Wis.

Charles C. Mann replies:

As John Lederer's letter shows, Marian Neudel is wrong. Almost all written and pictorial expression—every memo, diary entry, college paper, snapshot, and doodle—is automatically copyrighted

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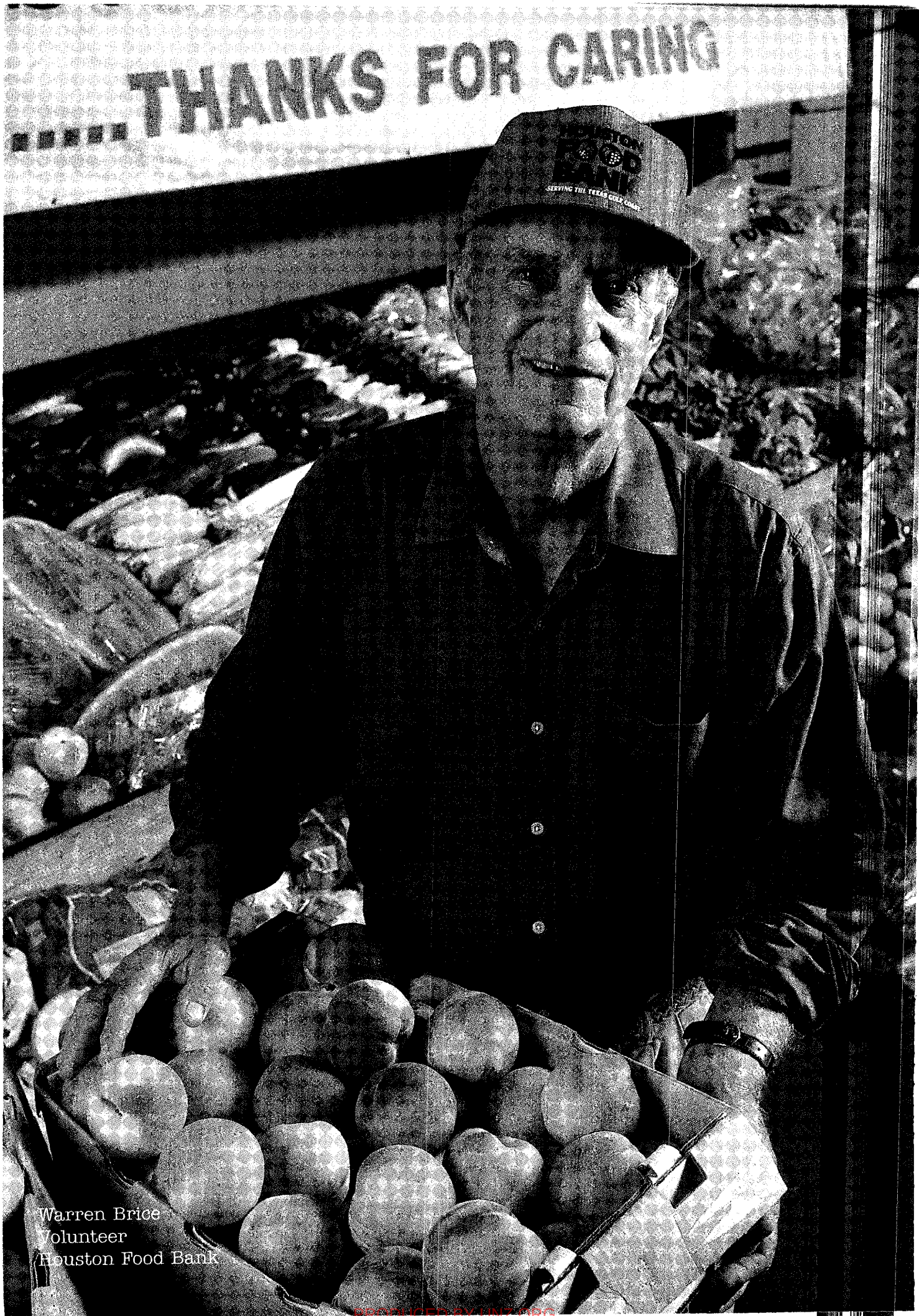
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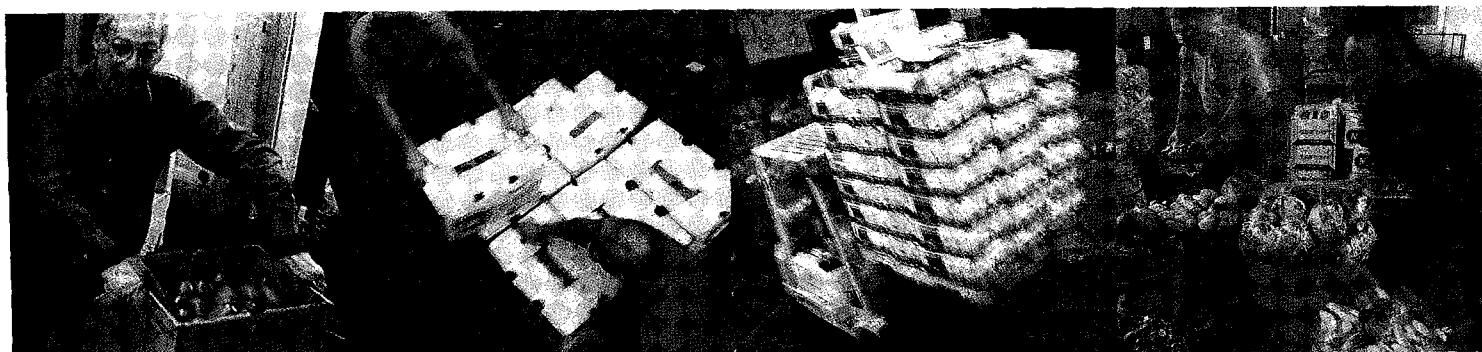
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Houston Food Bank

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The **Atlantic Monthly**

by its author. So are almost all novels, songs, paintings, and sculpture. The only exceptions I am aware of are commercial movies and computer programs. Nonetheless, Ms. Neudel is right about the recent increase in work-for-hire contracts (although many of the battles she refers to are covered by trade-secret law, state legislation that is not part of federal intellectual-property law). Her dislike of work-for-hire contracts makes all the more puzzling her snideness about James Brown, who spent years trying to free African-American musicians from them. Finally, Stephen Froikin's optimism about search engines is misplaced. As I noted in the article, search engines index only a small portion of the Web. And even if they do catch infringers, they can't do anything about people in rogue states—several Eastern European nations come to mind—where pirates are in effect an arm of the government.

War in Algeria

I was disappointed with Roger Kaplan's piece "The Libel of Moral Equivalence" (August *Atlantic*). In essence, Kaplan portrays the struggle in Algeria as between liberal democracy and Islamist obscurantism. Elections there are the "big story, with implications for the ability of Islamic cultures to accept modernity." But they have been ignored, because "Algerian society was under attack by a militant political movement flying the banner of Islam." Lest anyone suppose that this movement represented a part of Algerian society and its opinions, he explains, "The emirs and their drugged acolytes—drugged on evil brews of false religion and politics . . . had lost their bid to overthrow the Algerian state and were determined to bring down as many people with them as they could."

This is classic, if extreme, developmentalist dogma, according to which modernity can only be accepted or rejected, and benighted opponents of progress are to be pushed out of the way. In Algeria's war for independence, too, rebels were branded as religious fanatics who wanted to return to the Middle Ages. In fact, like some Islamist groups, the National Liberation Front (FLN) practiced mass reprisals against "disloyal" areas, banned children from school, and

killed schoolteachers. Then, too, the government granted amnesty to the repentant and won elections overwhelmingly, despite FLN boycotts backed by death threats. The French would not allow rebels to participate, explaining that the first such vote would be the last. Like Kaplan's interlocutors, they compared their opponents to Hitler and argued that any dialogue amounted to appeasement.

Yet Islamists are not the only ones who are barred from effectively participating in elections. Although Kaplan is silent on the issue, all Algeria's independent newspapers complain about election rigging. "Though used to electoral fraud, large sections of the population have been profoundly shocked by the extent," according to *El Watan*. "The shared feeling is that Algeria has started out on a road towards a long journey in time, but backwards." This is hardly the "dramatic evolution . . . toward liberal democracy" that Kaplan describes. Indeed, some Algerians blame the government's own illiberalism for allowing "the libel of moral equivalence" to arise.

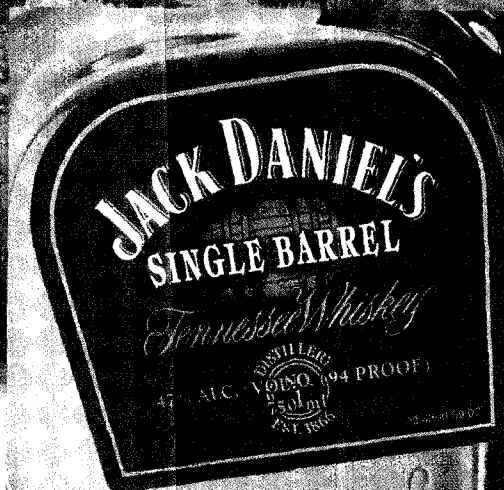
To read Kaplan, one might suppose that only a few, anonymous Westerners have been asking whether Algeria's government may be responsible for some of the atrocities. Though he does not name them, the UN high commissioner for human rights and the secretary general of Amnesty International are among those who have been calling for an international inquiry. But many Algerians, too, have held both the government and the Islamists responsible for the violence. As Salima Ghezali, the winner of the 1997 Sakharov Prize, recently wrote, "To choose a side, isn't this simply to choose one's victims?" It seems particularly ill-advised for outsiders to rush to judgment now that the government has finally allowed a UN team, under Mario Soares, to begin a fact-finding mission.

Most observers have demanded an outside inquiry because they realize that accounts of the war in what's left of the Algerian media must reflect the government line. The state monopolizes presses and newsprint and shuts down publications that displease it—including Ghezali's own weekly. In many cases official Algerian Press Service reports are simply reprinted. Stories, for instance, of abducted Algerian girls made to serve as sex slaves eventually appear in *The New*



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York Times without anyone's attempting independent verification along the way. In contrast to the gripping accounts of bloody massacres attributed to the Islamists, reports on government operations simply restate official casualty figures—which rarely record any wounded or captured alongside the slain, and never reveal noncombatant casualties.

Though Kaplan is to be commended for having gone to Algeria, he might have pointed out that any journalist who attempts to work there without a cordon of security guards is immediately expelled—hardly ideal conditions in which to conduct candid interviews. He might also have mentioned that earlier this year the government arrested anti-Islamist militia commanders after mass graves were uncovered. This discovery corroborated reports by Robert Fisk in the *Independent*, in which a number of former security agents admitted to participating in torture and summary executions and described how government forces sometimes impersonated Islamists while carrying out their crimes.

I hope *The Atlantic* will find a way to offer a more persuasive explanation of the Algerian tragedy than the emirs, drugs, and "evil brews" that Kaplan has conjured up.

Matthew Connelly
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Roger Kaplan replies:

The Soares mission for the United Nations completed its report in September, and although it did not claim to be a definitive or even a particularly thorough piece of research, its conclusions weren't notably different from those in my article.

Stories purportedly based on the confessions of police defectors who had participated in "death-squad" activities did indeed appear in the European press and in *Le Monde* last year, but the defectors were later shown to have been in Europe at the time of the crimes they claimed to have witnessed. There have been cases of brutal incarceration and rigorous interrogations of suspects, and early on in the troubles a Committee Against Torture arose, whose name was surely chosen for a reason, and many of whose members—to the best of my knowledge—have supported the ad-

mittedly contradictory policy of "reform and fight" that successive governments have followed.

Algerians will choose for themselves what balance they want to achieve between "modernity" and "tradition." It is scarcely here that we are going to refight the Algerian revolution, and everyone knows that the National Liberation Front was, as its name suggested, an independence movement with various tendencies. The point is that it represented "modernity" in the sense that it was the alternative to an untenable, racist, colonialist situation that could not change on its own. (In the end the French army was trying, much too late of course, to institute a "revolution" against both the FLN and the European Algerians.) The Algerians are not fighting over "models of development"; they are fighting to defend their state and their communities, knowing well that the politicians they serve are often mediocre, that public opinion is fickle, and that international observers are condescending.

America's Future

Robert D. Kaplan's utter ignorance of Canada ("Travels Into America's Future," August *Atlantic*), its history and its people, deserves a complete rebuttal, so here goes.

Kaplan begins his article with the absurdity that Canada did not have to struggle for independence from Britain. He forgets that we up here have fought civil wars (1837 and 1838) and insurrections (1870 and 1886), separatists (beginning in the 1870s and continuing to this day) and invaders (mostly from the south). We have been in actual armed conflict for much of our history; we have had well over thirty different wars in less than 400 years of settlement; we have burned down our own legislature; and it took more than 190 years from our initial push for independence from Britain, in 1791, until we patriated our constitution, in 1982. (So much for Kaplan's statement that Britain forced us to unite!)

Kaplan also says that Canada is "split by a blood-and-soil linguistic nationalism." Contrary to his belief, the country is still very much intact. Canada is that rare place where you can actually criticize the very concept of the place's ex-

istence without being labeled a traitor. I live in Quebec, trace my family right back to Wolfe's army, and am a Canadian, just as are many of my friends and neighbors who fundamentally disagree with me about where we should be taking this country in the future. There are no sure things in building a nation, but I am confident that Canada is a healthier concept than the United States is—and far less likely to end up as a military dictatorship. In fact, the greatest threat to our continuing existence is that very threat of dictatorship south of our border. That is why we must never succumb to the economic temptation of depending on the United States for our defense.

Kaplan says that "the Saint Lawrence River and the Great Lakes formed enough of a natural boundary for an Atlantic-oriented nation to take root." The fact is that the Saint Lawrence River is the border for only about ninety miles, from Cornwall to Kingston, Ontario. The entire border, more than 1,000 miles east of Cornwall, is a land border! Kaplan fails to realize that the United States' refusal to accept Canada as an equal trading partner at any time, up to and including the point at which NAFTA was passed, is why Canada oriented itself toward the North Atlantic. It had nothing to do with our southern border geography, and everything to do with the aggressive foreign policy of our southern neighbor.

Kaplan's next comment is breathtakingly arrogant: "Canada is increasingly like the northern United States." Any reasonable observer of the relations between Canada and the border states would unequivocally say that those states are actually becoming more and more like Canada, not vice versa. The innovative and liberal agenda that has provoked so much reaction from far-right religious groups in the United States is being imported from your northern neighbor. We are influencing your domestic policy much more than you are influencing ours in every sphere of activity except one—the economy. Our economy is too dependent on the U.S. economy for our own good, but even Kaplan noticed that your business leaders recognize a growing U.S. dependence on Canada.

Greg MacDonald
Pierrefons, Quebec

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Although Robert Kaplan is certainly correct in his assertion that Portland, Oregon, is “architecturally pleasing” and “meticulously planned,” he neglects to mention that this “stagnant perfection” comes at great cost to the actors themselves—that is, the residents and the homeless of downtown Portland, who have been hounded and reshuffled, Rudolph Giuliani-style, in order to transform Portland into a sparkling place where anxious suburbanites can feel comfortable shopping without hearing the dreaded requests for spare change. The same people who pay \$65 to cheer on low-income bohemian squatters in the hit musical *Rent* are afraid to shop within a few blocks of real-life versions.

Kaplan posits a kind of eco-conservative political consensus underpinning Portland’s urbanism. But this consensus, where it exists, rests more on the wishes of big business to draw upper-income day-trippers downtown than on the shared background and values to which Kaplan points. How ironic that the photograph chosen to grace your magazine’s table of contents shows Portland’s Pioneer

Square, a once-popular loitering area for local street youths. After a recent crack-down and riot, however, these youths have been harassed into relocation by a private security company. When a private security company is hired to patrol a seemingly public space, Portland becomes yet another example of a nationwide trend: the stripping away of civil liberties and the curtailment of truly public spaces in the interests of gentrification and economic revitalization.

Adam Luedtke
Portland, Oreg.

While reading Robert Kaplan’s effusive description of Orange County, I was reminded of Joel Garreau’s paean to auto-centric sprawl-burbs in his book *Edge City*. Though seemingly out to investigate this posturban phenomenon, both writers ended their mission as staunch converts and defenders, sold on and seduced by the affluence, diversity, and vitality they perceived. This bizarre infatuation has clouded their judgment.

Kaplan has it reversed. It is the Portland model for metropolitan develop-

ment, with its urban-growth boundaries and civic enhancements, that is future-thinking and visionary, accommodating growth within a seamless and sensible fabric. The Orange County approach, with its haphazard, autocratic sprawl creeping across the countryside, represents the backward, status quo development of the past half century.

Ricardo Hinkle
New York, N.Y.

Robert D. Kaplan replies:

Canada’s independence from Britain was a passive affair, so much so that British Columbia did not join the Canadian federation until several years later, in 1871, and then only because it was bribed into doing so by construction of the trans-continental railroad. Whereas English-speaking Quebecers cling desperately to the ideal of a strong Canada, British Columbians do not and never have. The Saint Lawrence River basin and the Great Lakes separated much of Canada’s late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century population from the inhabitants to the south; thus my point stands.



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Tango in Argentina

I've been to Buenos Aires twice, drawn there by my passion for the Argentine tango. I was surprised to find that Benjamin and Christina Schwarz ("Half a World Away," September *Atlantic*) didn't mention the "T" word once.

Tango is ubiquitous in Buenos Aires. The cabdrivers listen to tango music on their radios. Tango dancers perform in the street during the Sunday-afternoon flea market in San Telmo. Tango singers entertain on El Caminito, in La Boca, and the cheesy souvenir shops in that colorful part of town are filled with postcards and T-shirts depicting dancing couples dressed in black. The singer mentioned at the Ideal Café was no doubt singing tangos. The famous Tortoni Café is in the same building as the Academia del Tango, where visiting dancers, making their pilgrimages to the tango mecca, pick up a guidebook that lists the phone numbers of shoemakers and tango masters. Tourists go to glitzy tango shows at nightclubs, and locals dance the more personal social version of this romantic

and sophisticated dance at Milongas nightly. Newsstands in the center of town feature tango newsletters and magazines. Turn on a TV in Buenos Aires and you'll stumble on Tango Solo—the all-tango all-the-time station.

As a tango lover, I've grown accustomed to travel articles that focus on the nightclub tango shows and miss the wonderful social dance that brings together Argentines of all ages and visitors from around the world. But I had never before seen a story on Buenos Aires that failed to mention one of the most notable features of the city.

Candida B. Korman
New York, N.Y.

Benjamin and Christina Schwarz reply:

As Candida Korman rightly insists (and as we mentioned in our article), Buenos Aires is famous for this passionate and fierce style of music and ballroom dance, and we certainly expected to hear and see it everywhere in the city. The trouble is, we didn't. To be sure, an extraordinary variety of tango tapes is available at music stores, but alas, not a

single one of our cabdrivers was playing them. The singer in the Ideal was not, in fact, performing tangos, nor was anyone singing tangos on El Caminito on the days when we were there. The tango dancers at the San Telmo flea market were impressive, but the very fact that they were performing a demonstration for tourists left us with the impression that the tango—like flamenco in Spain and the blues on Beale Street in Memphis—is more a relic than a vital part of the natives' lives. Clearly, the expensive tango shows, while no doubt spectacular, are strictly for tourists; and although we understand that venues exist for serious tango devotees, nightclubs in Buenos Aires predominantly cater to those who want to dance to rock and disco (just as they do in the world's other great cities). All in all, not finding anything particularly nice to say about the health of the tango in Buenos Aires, we decided to say nothing at all. We could only report what we had experienced, and we're happy, for the sake of tango lovers, that Ms. Korman's experience has been different.

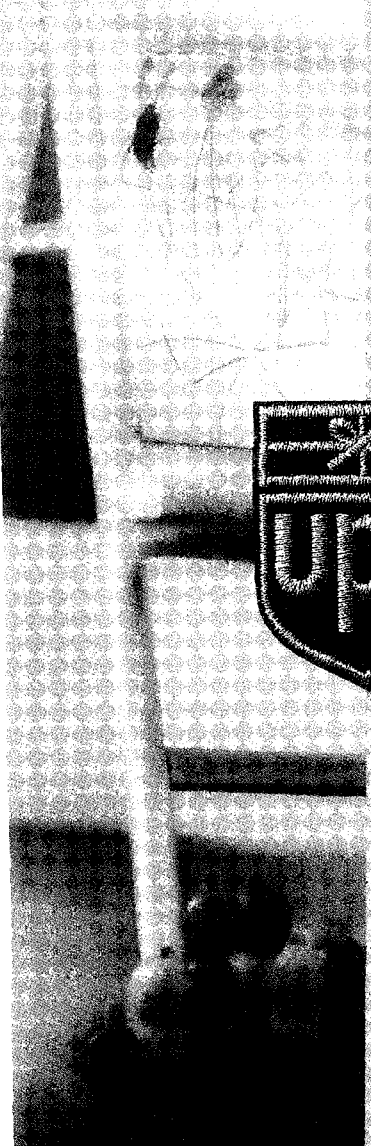


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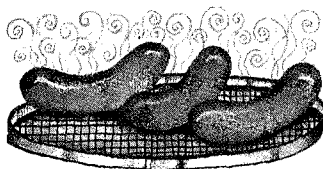


Demographics

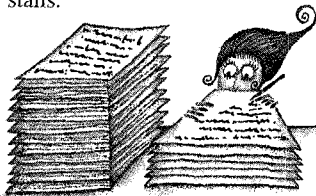
Late this month phones will be busier than usual at the National Runaway Switchboard, a federally funded toll-free hot line for troubled youths: twice as many calls generally come in during the several days after Christmas as during the rest of the month. The hot line, which in all of last year received nearly 110,000 calls, links the late-December volume to the eruption of family strife that is reined in before and during the holiday and to the fact that children are home from school (spring break is another peak time for calls). No one knows how many runaways and homeless children there are in the United States; the most recent nationwide study, which put the figure at more than a million, is nearly a decade old. Two thirds of the callers are female, and nearly three quarters are aged 15 to 17; however, calls from younger children are on the rise. In recent years the hot line has collaborated with Greyhound to give runaways bus tickets home; more than 200 runaways a month return to their families under this program.

Environment

The final report of the first study of emissions from street vendors' cooking devices is expected to be released to the public and to government agencies this month. The investigation is part of an ongoing joint program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and its Mexican counterpart to improve air quality along the border. It was prompted by scientists who



posited that smoke from vendors' grills and stoves, typically used to cook meats for tacos and other regional foods, was a significant source of haze. A team from the EPA has been measuring vendors' emissions by cooking meats in a laboratory in North Carolina, using charcoal from the border region. If they conclude that vendors' cooking devices are a major source of pollution, program officials will then seek to investigate low-cost emission-control technologies appropriate for carts and stalls.



Health & Safety

December 31: One of the first tests of a solution for the so-called Y2K problem will occur by today, the date by which the 60-some contractors who process and pay Medicare and Medicaid claims have been asked to ensure that their computers will be able to handle the advent of the year 2000. (As everybody knows by now, many computers and programs were designed to recognize only the last two digits of a given year, and unless modifications are made will assume that "00" refers to 1900.) The Health Care Financing Administration made the request in order to give contractors time to work out glitches, in the hope of avoiding any interruption in service a year hence. The renovations are expected to involve the revision of more than 49 million lines of computer code, along with upgrading hardware and telecommunications equipment. Most Medicare and Medicaid claims—nearly a billion each year—are processed electronically. If contractors fail to have their systems ready by the beginning of 2000, the HCFA could be confronted with the prospect of processing claims by hand.

Arts & Letters

December 6: Brassai: *The Eye of Paris*—the first major retrospective of this artist's work in 30 years—opens at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston. The exhibit, which commemorates the 100th anniversary of Brassai's birth, will consist of some 140 photographs, drawings, sculptures, and books garnered from more than 40 collections in the United States, Europe, and Japan. Among the works are a number of photographs that have rarely been shown in public. Born in Transylvania, the artist emigrated to France in the early 1920s. Soon thereafter he began taking photographs to supplement written journalism assignments; at first he loathed the medium, for which he is now best known. The exhibit will run through February, and then travel to Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.



Food

Owing to the holidays, December is the peak month for the consumption of foie gras, the "fatty liver" of overfed ducks and geese. A decade ago this delicacy was virtually unknown to most Americans; last year some 150,000 pounds of it were sold in the United States. Only two domestic companies produce livers for foie gras; before the first came into existence, in 1984, chefs had to make do either with livers imported after being partially cooked (raw poultry products cannot legally be imported from most countries) or with raw livers smuggled into the country, commonly in the bellies of fish. Animal-rights activists have taken foie-gras producers to task for the treatment of their birds, which are force-fed several times a day through tubes.



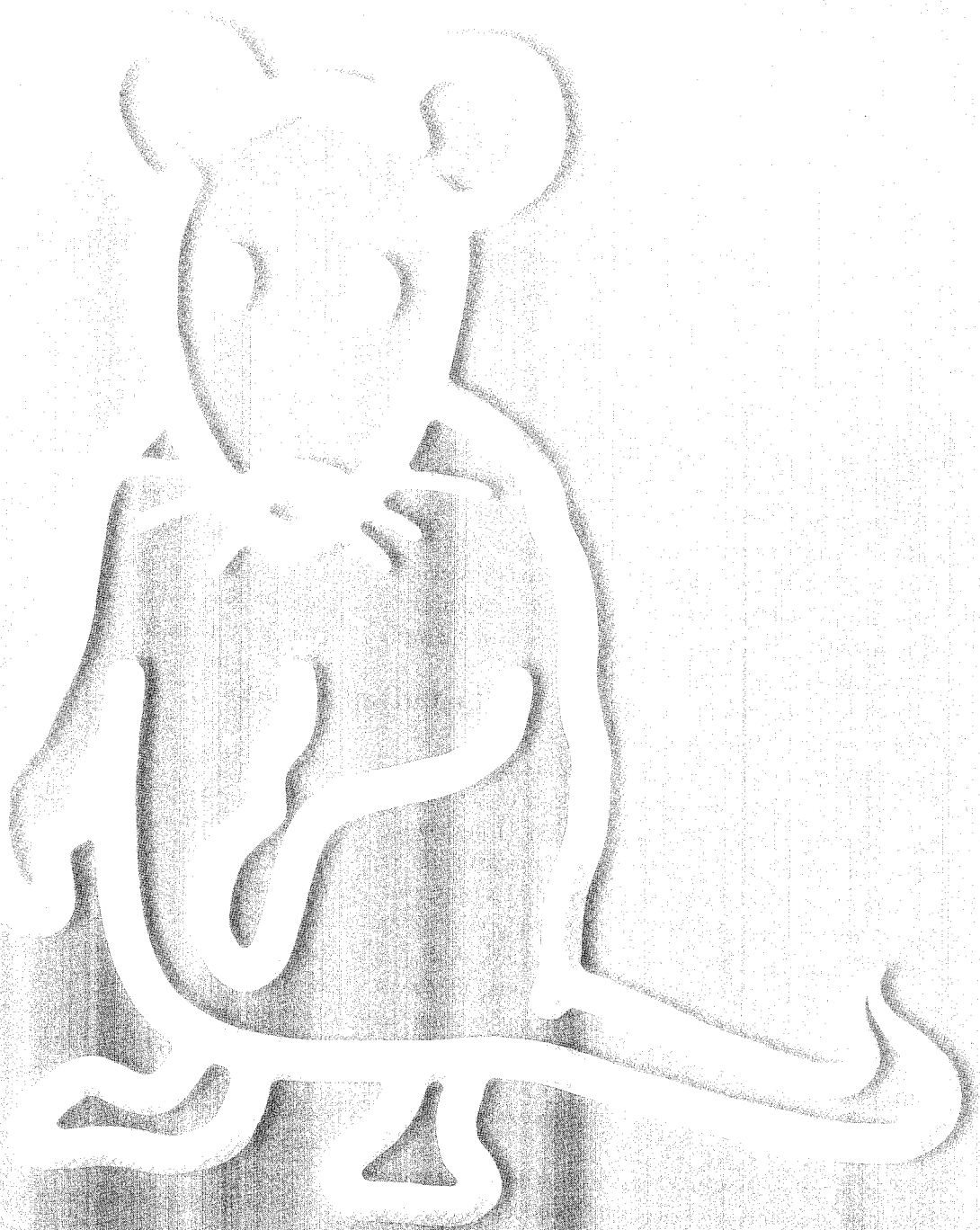
The Skies

December 3: Full Moon, also known this month as the Big Freezing Moon. 13: The Geminid meteor shower, one of the year's most reliable, peaks tonight. It will be best seen beginning in the late evening. 21: At 8:56 P.M. EST the Winter Solstice occurs in the Northern Hemisphere, marking the start of increasing hours of daylight. 31: A leap second will be added on the official U.S. Naval Observatory Master Clock before midnight, to compensate for Earth's slowing rotation.

50 Years Ago

Francis Henry Taylor, writing in the December, 1948, issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*: "Even to attempt to associate truth with beauty brings down the horror and contempt of the intelligentsia today. Art for them has ceased to have any moral or religious significance; they have . . . made it a form of private communication . . . whereby abstract associations of form and color convey intimacies scarcely less cryptic than those revealed on the psychoanalyst's couch. The innocent layman . . . may be forgiven for suspecting that the chief purpose of American art is to illustrate the Kinsey Report. Instead of soaring like an eagle through the heavens as did his ancestors . . . the contemporary artist has been reduced to the status of a flat-chested pelican, strutting upon the intellectual wastelands and beaches, content to take whatever nourishment he can from his own too meager breast."





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Back to Basics

Easy-to-understand measures that could bring palpable improvement to public life

A REFORMER," New York City's corrupt mayor Jimmy Walker once observed, "is a guy who rides through a sewer in a glass-bottomed boat." Americans these days understandably regard politics and politicians with dismay, even contempt, but the counterweight on the scales of public opinion is a well-earned suspicion of reformers and reform. Poets and philosophers down the years have issued sober warnings on the subject. Coleridge's observation is typical: "Every reform, however necessary, will by weak minds be carried to an excess, that itself will need reforming."

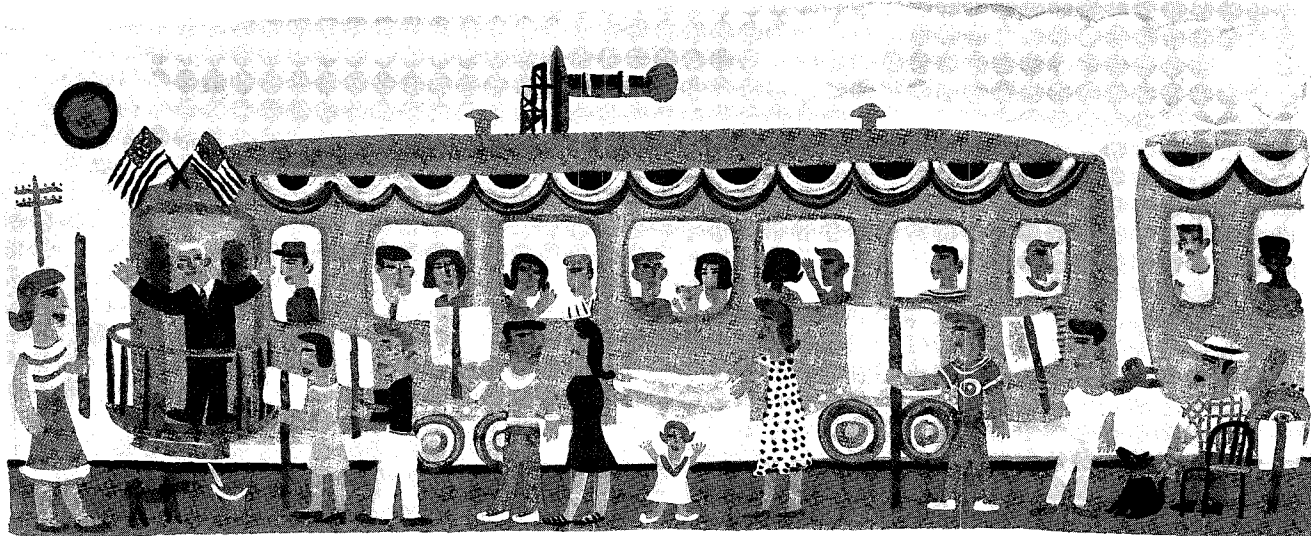
A realist could hardly disagree. And yet it must also be admitted that one of the chief drawbacks of present-day efforts at reform has simply been their complexity. In ancient times what we now might think of as "regulatory oversight" tended to be expressed with peremptory concision: "Tell the Israelites: anyone, whether an Israelite or an alien residing in Israel, who gives any of his offspring to Molech, shall be put to death." Today, to cite but one example, the full text of the laws and regulations covering the conduct of federal election campaigns—reforms dating back to the 1970s, and widely known to be inadequate—fills a dozen official volumes.

Calls for political reform are once more in the air. In response, we might experiment with simplicity. Consider the following:

by Cullen Murphy

The No-Fly Zone. Modern Presidents almost never travel long distances in America by surface transportation, preferring the efficiency and glamour of Air Force One. However, on the rare occasions when they do undertake journeys by train or bus, the effect along the route is one of authentic popular expectation. Knots of ordinary people sit fanning themselves in lawn chairs, the paint still sticky on their handmade signs. This is how it always used to be: see the accounts in books like *Washington's Southern Tour, 1791* and *North for Union: John Appleton's Journal of a Tour to New England Made by President Polk in June and July 1847*. Franklin D. Roosevelt traveled some 544,000 miles by rail during his twelve years in office, stopping at Nowheresvilles along the way and maintaining a leisurely daytime touring speed of no more than thirty-five miles an hour. A modern President may cover that distance by plane in a couple of years, encountering planted crowds at airports and moneyed ones in hotel ballrooms, and seeing essentially nothing.

So why not declare the continental United States to be a no-fly zone for the President? Indeed, a prohibition on domestic air travel ought to cover aspirants to the presidency as well. Establishing a no-fly zone would restore some of the populist aura of a medieval ruler's progress through the realm—in this case, a realm whose terrestrial vastness and loneliness are essential elements of its character.



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The Stamp Act. Concerned citizens wring their hands over our venal system of campaign financing, and over our apparent inability to implement reforms that don't contain fresh loopholes. What if we stopped worrying about the size of campaign war chests and instead started stipulating how the money had to be spent? Imagine, for instance, that candidates could raise as much money as they wished, from whom ever they pleased, through whatever methods they might devise—but were allowed by law to communicate with voters only by means of words written on paper and carried through the mails.

In 1995–1996 candidates for national office spent hundreds of millions of dollars to buy radio and television time for advertising. Directing that sum away from the airwaves and into the printed word would have far-reaching and beneficent consequences. For one thing, the U.S. Postal Service would be bound to improve. More important, so would the quality of public discourse: committing thoughts to writing almost inevitably has an uplifting effect on communication. Moreover, illiteracy would gradually disappear, as political leaders across the nation, competing for literate voters, began spending huge sums on “party-building activities”—like running good schools. Even Republicans might perceive the wisdom of teaching the native-born children of illegal aliens how to read.

The Thingvellir Protocol. In a year or two Iceland will celebrate the millennium of its conversion to Christianity, and we will therefore soon be hearing a great deal, or at least a certain amount, about Iceland's contributions to Western civilization. Iceland's parliament, the Althing, came into existence more than a thousand years ago, and is widely acknowledged to be Europe's oldest legislative body. The Althing was ahead of its time in one other important respect: it was empowered to keep no more laws on the books than the presiding speaker could commit to memory. The rule was enforced every year by means of a public recitation by the speaker upon the Law Rock, a lava promontory overlooking the plains of Thingvellir.

This procedure, and the limitations it implies, hold great appeal. Modern America represents, of course, an advanced technological society, and it would be simplistic to adopt the Thingvellir Protocol without some modification: we really do need more laws than did tenth-century Iceland. An updated version of the protocol would permit the speaker of the House to supplement his memory with that of one other person—maybe the House minority leader. (Alternatively, my wife suggests the person occupying the center space on *Hollywood Squares*.)

The “Natural-Born” Exclusion. Article II, Section 1, of the United States Constitution restricts the presidency to natural-born citizens of the United States—the very people who have so often fallen short in our political life. One refinement that we ought to consider is deletion from the eligibility clause of the words “person except a natural born” after the word “no.” The provision would thus stipulate that “no [...] Citizen” shall henceforward “be eligible to the Of-

fice of President”—thereby putting the White House exclusively in the hands of non-Americans. This measure may strike some as bizarre, but it finds powerful precedent in the practice of many Italian city-states during the Renaissance: they placed executive authority in the hands of a *podestà* who by law was selected from outside the commune. The rationale was compelling. As one chronicler of twelfth-century Genoa observed, outsiders could assume the mantle of power without stirring up “civil discords and hateful conspiracies and divisions.” Outsiders would lack corrupting ties to local economic, political, and familial interests, and also the slight whiff of disrepute that lingers even among the honorable after a long career in one community's public life.

Would we still hear complaints about a lack of candidates with “stature,” or an absence of “choice,” if instead of American citizens we had Tony Blair, Gro Brundtland, Nelson Mandela, Kim Dae Jung, and Mary Robinson to pick from? Not likely. Nor would we be hearing about troubling ties to Big Tobacco or Big Poultry. At the same time, making this electoral regime reciprocal—that is, offering our ineligible native-born candidates to foreign lands—would give the idea of “exporting democracy” a whole new meaning. Analysts frequently bemoan the fractious ethnicity and anemic democratic traditions in many struggling young countries. What better solution than the creation of an international *podesteria*, which could provide a Jesse Jackson or an Elizabeth Dole, a Mario Cuomo or a Steve Forbes, to serve as chief executive in Belgrade, Kabul, or Kinshasa?

The Screen Test. Finally, we could bring much-needed stability to the Executive Office of the President by making some basic decisions, as a people, about who is going to hold the job of President in the movies. Foreign audiences, judging us by our film output, must think we go through leaders with the impatience of Rome under the Praetorians. A partial list of those who have served as movie President during the past decade would include Harrison Ford, Michael Douglas, Bill Pullman, Morgan Freeman, Gene Hackman, Donald Moffat, Nigel Hawthorne, Stanley Anderson, Jim Curley, Kevin Kline, and Anthony Hopkins. Jack Lemmon and James Garner have depicted ex-Presidents. Glenn Close and Ben Kingsley have served as Vice President. John Travolta has run for the nation's highest office.

On Election Day we should vote not only for a President but also for an actor or actress to play the movie role of President for the next four years—the projected winner, one might say. The victorious candidate would assume all cinematic Oval Office duties during the coming term—but, of course, he or she would have to forswear all other movie and television roles, not to mention commercials.

My own preference would be for Morgan Freeman. He is a man of immense personal dignity who can boast military experience (*Glory*) and who has already done his prison time (*The Shawshank Redemption*). I'll look forward to seeing him in *Amtrak One*. ☞

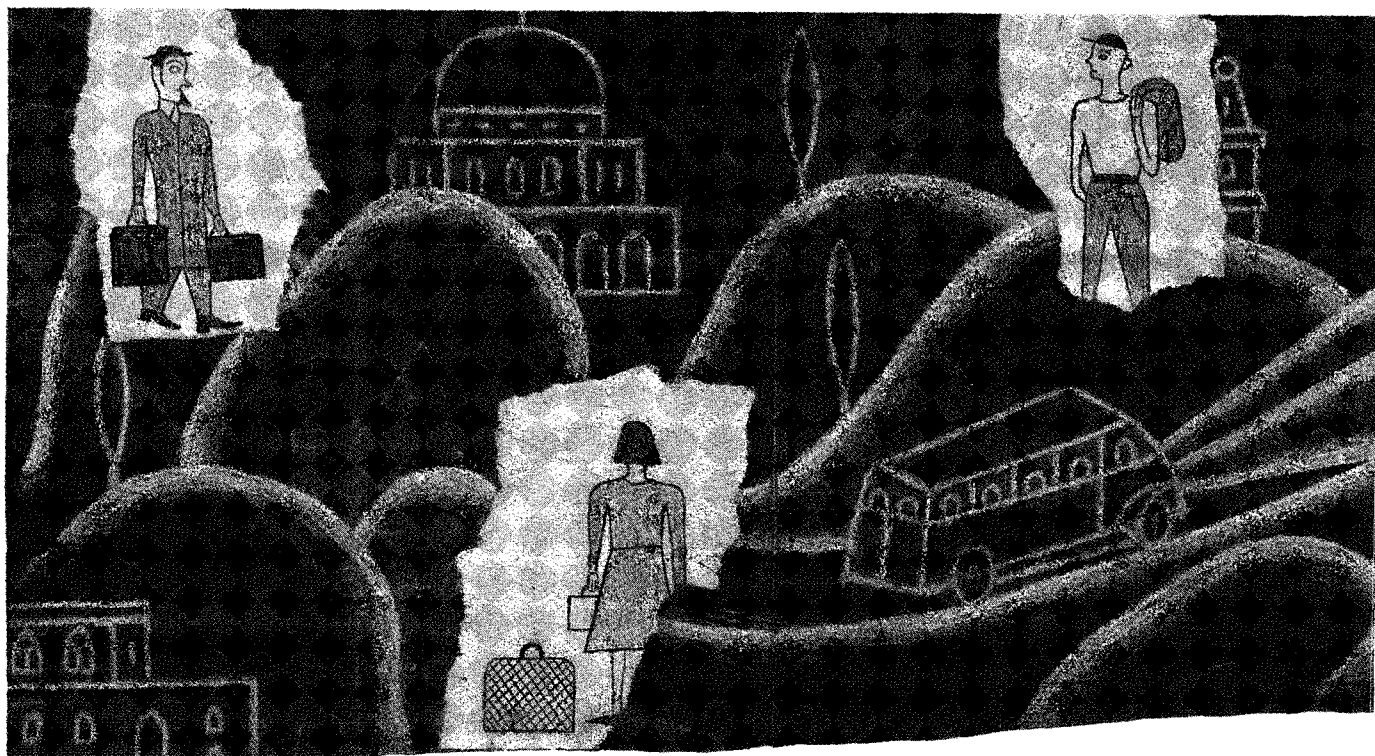


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Neshering

*Sharing a cab in Jerusalem requires
making a leap of faith*

NO man on earth is as imperturbable as a Nesher cabbie—the fellow who drives a shared taxi from Jerusalem to the airport and back again.

Sharing suggests merely that seven or eight strangers are traveling together in a tall white van in order to save money and trouble; the rattling of their luggage in the back reassures them that it hasn't fallen out.

But in this country of intense individuals the act of sharing a Nesher—of being compressed with respect to thighs and shoulders—forces sentiments up from the heart and out of the mouth. Sharing a Nesher to the airport obliges a skullcapped gentleman to question the driver's route; each turn becomes a matter of metaphysical urgency. Sharing entitles a glamorous young woman to

complain loudly about making a trip without her boyfriend, who was viciously *not* invited to the third wedding of her second cousin. "Why bother with Cousin Yael's wedding to begin with?" she asks me. "The new husband won't last any longer than the others." Sharing confers on a matron the right to know

the contents of her seatmate's canvas sack, which not only

is taking up its allotted space on the floor but is expanding, attacking her own modest tote, which contains only a refrigerator. Sharing gives a thin old man the privilege of remarking that the new moon over a charred forest could be a wisp of the fire that swept through those trees four years earlier. Yehuda Amichai might like the image. "Leaves without trees must wander," the old

man softly quotes. "A heavy mystery lies over the wood," says a young man, also very thin, who until now has been as quiet as the moon. *He* is quoting Bialik. In the dark interior of the cab, lit at rhythmic intervals by the highway lamps, the young man and the old exchange a look of poetic complicity.

The Nesher cabbie drives on, unmoved by the prattle behind him—directions, complaints, squabbles, and recitations. Unmoved is what we want him to be. We have put our trust in him; here in the Middle East that is no trivial act.

THE Nesher Company, which operates the most illustrious fleet of shared taxis in Israel, claims a perfect record. Querying friends and acquaintances, I found only one person who thought he'd heard of an incident in which Nesher failed to arrive on time. This had happened so long ago that the mode of transportation was probably a camel. But despite the company's reputation, a new customer must make a leap of faith. Say your flight is on a Thursday. You telephone Nesher on Tuesday; you are told that it already has its hands full booking Wednesday. "Call back tomorrow, if you please." (The polite phrase fools nobody; your pleasure

by Edith Pearlman



is of little consequence.) You call back on Wednesday, braced for the news that Thursday is now booked. But no: the voice, though not exactly accommodating in tone, accommodates. "So when's your flight?" it asks. "And what's your address? And what's your name? And what's your telephone number?" When you divulge all this, the voice tells you what time you'll be picked up. Be ready, if you please—or even if you don't.

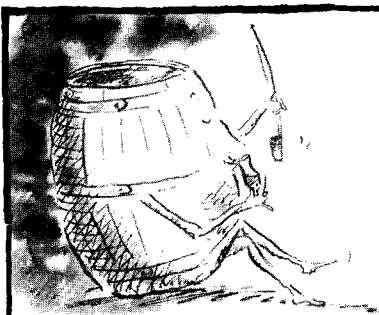
During my year in Jerusalem, Nesher never failed me. It picked me up at five in the morning to catch an 8:30 plane to London; it ploughed through the unholy afternoon traffic to get me onto a chartered flight to Istanbul; time after time it arrived promptly at half past nine in the evening so that I could board the 1:00 A.M. jumbo to Kennedy. I was often one of the first passengers to be picked up. The taxi then bounced from hill to hill, from hotel to balconied apartment to shuttered house, until, warm and aromatic, loaded with people and luggage, it turned onto the westbound highway.

My favorite time to Nesher was late at night. I stared out the taxi window at corners of Jerusalem I'd explored under the sun. Under the moon their details vanished; their mystery deepened. A tiled courtyard now glittered like a

cache of cursed diamonds. A popular hummus stall seemed to shelter hunched bandits. Streets where by day learned men hurried past in gaberdines, their pale faces averted from the temptations of this world, became by night alleys where faces disappeared altogether; coats walked untenanted, and broad hats floated a few inches above spectral shoulders.

Like a spacecraft the Nesher cab probes glowing little cul-de-sacs. It scoots along the rims of valleys. It trundles past landmarks and government buildings, all bathed in floodlights. And then we are out of the dry city, the city of silvery light. We hurtle along the highway, our fates fleetingly linked. "My ridiculous cousin," mutters the young woman. "'Tomorrow storm shall carry you away,'" says the young lover of poetry. The Nesher fetches up at the airport, which lies low under palms like a furtive Caribbean landing strip. Our intimacy vanishes. We tumble out of the cab and pay our fares and wheel our suitcases off to our respective flights.

But we'll be back, and the Nesher taxis will be lined up waiting for us. The drivers sometimes perform a rough triage on the passengers according to their destinations, sometimes take us as we come. One afternoon my mates included a finicky visitor just arrived from Manhattan. While we waited in the cab for a final passenger to appear (Nesher disapproves of empty seats), my new American friend, unhappy with the hugger-mugger tossing of his luggage, got out of the taxi and climbed into its rear to arrange things better. Meanwhile, the last passenger took his seat. Thinking all his charges safe, the driver started the vehicle—and there was the New Yorker squatting among the suitcases, one leg bent under him, the other extended, as if he had been summoned to the Holy Land expressly to dance the Kazachok in the back of a cab. We Nesher regulars yelled "Stop!" The driver composedly stopped, got out, and helped the shaken visitor onto the sidewalk and into the seat where he belonged. Whose business is the luggage anyway? the driver's calm face suggested. But "If you please" was all he said. ☛



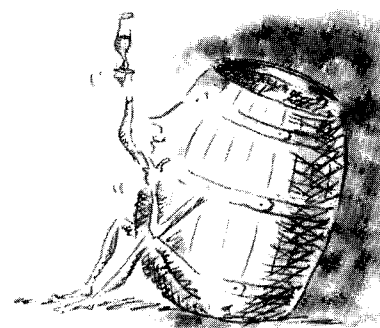
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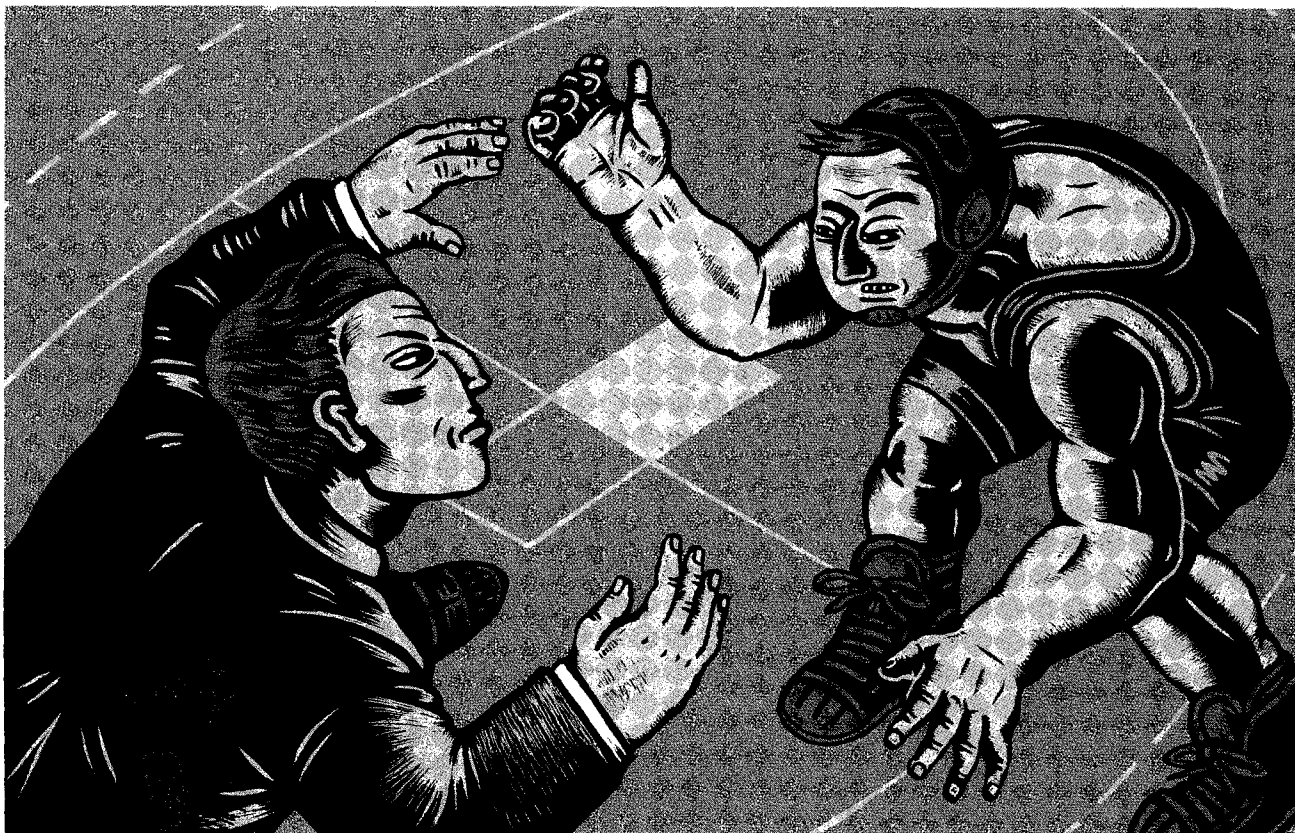
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Hoods Against Democrats

In Bulgaria the distinction between the state and organized crime is clear—for now

BOGOMIL Bonev, Bulgaria's Interior Minister, a towering, thick-set man with wavy black hair, spoke to me last spring in a tense voice as we sat in his vast, gloomy office—the same office where

security officials of the former Commu-

nist regime may have worked out details for the 1981 assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II. Now the situation was reversed. Bonev was hunting down the Communist-era security service, which along with former members of Bulgaria's

Olympic wrestling teams had broken up into various criminal "groupings."

"One of the reasons our criminal groups became so powerful," Bonev told me to explain this curious turnabout, "is

that they were organized by the state itself. The other very

important factor was the embargo against Serbia. Breaking the embargo was a catalyst for organized crime in the Balkans to the degree that Prohibition was in the United States. My biggest problem has been that our policemen did

not look at the wrestlers as criminals."

The outcome of this battle has major significance, because perhaps no other country in the world has made more progress than Bulgaria toward stable Western democracy in the past two years. In early 1997 street demonstrations against a corrupt and ineffective government of former Communists brought Bulgaria to near anarchy. New elections returned the non-Communist United Democratic Forces (a broader version of the coalition that ruled from 1991 to 1994) to power. Because the UDF, divided as it was into multiple factions, had been neither competent nor orderly, few observers were optimistic this time; I certainly was not. But the UDF united all the factions into one party, and put together a cabinet of young technocrats. Helped by President Petar Stoyanov, a lawyer in his forties with a methodical, disciplined mind, who was elected in November of 1996, the cabinet seems finally to have put Bulgaria on the road to real stability and reform. Even the International Monetary Fund is happy. Yet, as I found out during a visit of several weeks last spring, this is only half the story.

by Robert D. Kaplan

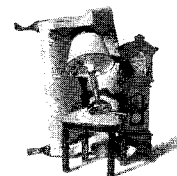
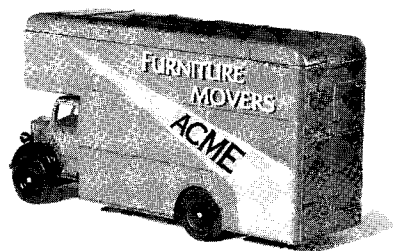
WITHIN twenty-four hours of crossing into Bulgaria by train from Romania, I began hearing two words over and over again: "wrestlers" and "groupings"—particularly in reference to Multi-group, the Orion Group, and the Tron Group, names that conjure up a blend of George Orwell and Batman. "They run the country," I was told—or, at the least, the groupings were as palpable a presence in people's lives as the government.

A Bulgarian friend explained: "In the Communist era, Bulgaria had a great Olympic wrestling tradition, and weight lifting, too. When these regime favorites lost their subsidies, they went into racketeering—with the help of friends from the security services—and amassed tremendous wealth during the power vacuum that followed the regime's collapse. The wrestlers all look the same—big and tough, with cell phones, fancy cars, and Versace suits, and young girls on their arms. All their girlfriends are beautiful in the same way: thin, with blonde hair and vacuous expressions, and adorned with gold. At a restaurant where a meal costs more than most Bulgarians make in a month, I heard one of these girls tell her wrestler boyfriend over and over, 'This is so cheap; I can't believe how cheap this is.' The wrestlers and their girlfriends go to expensive nightclubs with loud metallic music, where go-go dancers sing cheesy lyrics like 'I love *shopska* ['peasant'] salad.' Everyone knows that his car will be stolen if it is not 'insured' with one of the wrestlers' 'insurance' companies. Another name for the wrestlers is the *moutras*—the 'ugly faces.' We're all repulsed by their behavior, but we have to deal with them. This is a country where people have put their life savings into sugar and flour because of inflation, yet there is a criminal class driving stolen Audis and Mercedes."

Jovo Nikolov, a flinty reporter for the weekly *Kapital*, the nation's most respected news publication, began an article about organized crime in the Fall, 1997, *East European Constitutional Review* this way:

A couple of years ago, one of the owners of a well-known Bulgarian bank beat up his senior foreign currency dealer in front of the entire staff. The boss was enraged because the dealer had just lost \$1.2 million in what appeared to be a routine transaction.

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There and then, the currency dealer was forced to sign a document stating that he would work for a nominal wage until the bank's losses were restored.

The banker in this incident is a former wrestler. Today he is an influential member of several "economic groups" in Bulgaria.

Frequently I saw the wrestlers as I walked around the capital, Sofia. A high-performance car would screech to a halt,

When Olympic wrestling and weight lifting lost their subsidies, the Bulgarian athletes went into racketeering.

and muscular men in fashionable clothes would emerge with cell phones, their cologne noticeable from fifteen feet away. The boss might have a beautiful woman on each arm. It was both frightening and pathetic. The grounds of the wrestlers' expensive homes—on the slopes of Mount Vitosha, above the haze of pollution that hovers over Sofia—are surrounded by two-story-high brick walls and punctuated with satellite dishes.

Organized crime is a common feature of former Warsaw Pact societies: toward the end of the Cold War, Communist parties evolved into large-scale mafias, which, after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, divided into smaller mafias that bought off the politicians who served in democratic but weak governments. Also common are allegations of a new Russian imperialism, by way of Europe-wide crime connections and the energy monopoly Gazprom. Nowhere, however, are such phenomena so transparent as in Bulgaria—a poor, small country of fewer than 10 million people in which democratic institutions are valiantly fighting a Russian attempt to regain a former satellite by criminal stealth. Bulgaria illustrates more clearly than anywhere else how dangerous the evils of the coming century might be, because they

are so very ambiguous. It is no accident that the word "groupings" is used instead of "mafias": these firms are dangerous hybrids engaged in fully legitimate enterprises that are audited by Western accountants. Their increasing links to Western multinationals have helped to mask activities like compact-disc pirating, the smuggling and sale of illicit drugs, money laundering, and extortion. One foreign official told me, "These groupings engage in violent intimidation and they corrupt politicians, and their genius is covering their tracks."

The leaders of such groups, and similar ones throughout the former Communist world, should not be mistaken for robber barons like Andrew Carnegie, Edward H. Harriman, and John D. Rockefeller. A century ago these men produced wealth for America (in the form of steel plants, railroads, and oil fields) as well as for themselves. The groupings have skimmed profits by raping state assets. They have shown that global capitalism does not necessarily promote civil society: what counts is the nature of capitalism in each country.

Here is a description of how Bulgaria's crime groupings evolved, what they have done, and how they illuminate Russia's new imperial strategy after the collapse of its armed forces—a collapse revealed by the 1996 defeat in Chechnya. My information is based on written sources and on interviews with Bulgarian officials, foreign diplomats in Sofia, and, in particular, the investigative reporter Jovo Nikolov, whose old clothes and unshaven face obscure the discerning professionalism he has maintained in pursuing this story. His job is dangerous. In May of this year Anna Zarkova, a local journalist who had exposed these criminal groups in her articles for the daily *Trud*, had sulfuric acid hurled at her face at a bus stop. Zarkova, the mother of two children, lost her left ear and much of the sight in one eye.

CRIME in Bulgaria has no prominent tradition, as in Italy, nor is there even one of heroic thieves or warrior clans, as in Russia, Serbia, or Albania. Absent, too, is the colorful aspect that distinguishes criminal circles in the Caucasus—particularly in Georgia and Chechnya, with their family mafias and highwaymen. The Bulgarian groupings came purely out of the transition from

Communist totalitarianism to parliamentary democracy. Because this transition is unique in history, these groups are too. Zhelyu Zhelev, Bulgaria's first post-Communist President and the author of the 1982 dissident work *What Is Fascism?* (in which he actually defines communism), told me that a totalitarian state should logically be followed by a military regime. He gave the example of Francisco Franco, who, by taking Spain from a fascist to a military regime (bolstered by the Catholic Church), allowed for a subsequent relatively peaceful and civil transition to democracy. "But the West's victory in the Cold War and its support for democracy made a direct transition to democracy possible in Eastern Europe," Zhelev explained. The explosion of organized crime was an ironic side effect.

It began in the late 1980s, before the fall of the Berlin Wall, when a middle-aged Bulgarian apparatchik, Andrei Lukanov, who was born in the Soviet Union and had spent many years there, realized that the Communist system was dying. He began developing a plan to turn local Party leaders into economic leaders. The aging Todor Zhivkov, who had been the Communist Party boss of Bulgaria since 1954, hated Lukanov, seeing him as a radical reformer. But Lukanov understood the future. Just as another middle-aged apparatchik, Slobodan Milosevic, realized that ethnic nationalism was the only way for his generation of Communists in Serbia to preserve their villas and hunting lodges, Lukanov saw that only through economic reform could Communists in Bulgaria remain in power. In the early 1990s Lukanov twice served as Prime Minister in an elected Bulgarian government composed of ex-Communists; he used privatization as a mechanism to help found the most powerful of the oligarchical groupings, Multigroup, by transferring state assets to his friends.

On October 2, 1996, Lukanov was gunned down in front of his house in Sofia. No one has been apprehended for the gangland-style killing, but the assumption among many experts is that Lukanov was murdered by the very beast he had created, because he was no longer necessary as a transition figure. Many believe that Lukanov's views had become too conservative for Multigroup's new regime, headed at the time by Ilia Pavlov, a former Olympic wrestler and

(through his first wife) the son-in-law of one of the Communist-era bosses of the security services. Another prevalent theory is that the assassination was ordered by erstwhile allies in the Bulgarian Socialist regime whose corruption Lukanov had threatened to expose. A Sofia-based Western business executive told me, "Lukanov knew that his friends were skimming so much cream off the state that the supply would soon run out. He knew that they would eventually have to compromise with the democratic authorities, in order to satisfy the IMF and international investors." Still others believe the killing was the work of a Russian mafia. Yet in the shady world where Lukanov garnered both power and fortune, all these suspects seem to converge as bitter enemies of reform. The business executive put it this way: "They killed him for the same reason that Zhivkov hated him—Lukanov was always the messenger of a future no one liked."

Of course, the formation of the groupings involved much more than one man's having an idea. The breakdown of the Communist state provided all sorts of

opportunities for people close to power. Olympic wrestlers quickly got their hands on the border checkpoints and the motels along Bulgaria's international highways, for instance, and gleaned revenues from prostitution and currency dealing. This gave them access to the car-theft business, which involved not only local vehicles but also vehicles stolen in Western Europe and then shipped to the former Soviet Union across the Black Sea. In 1989, the last year of communism, 4,318 cars were stolen in Bulgaria; in 1991 the number was 12,873, and theft has remained close to that level ever since. The same people then formed "insurance" companies: because they were responsible for the thievery, they were in a position to offer guarantees against it in return for hefty premiums. Throughout Bulgaria I saw security-agency stickers on cars and houses—especially for VIS-2, an agency created by Vassil Iliev, another ex-wrestler, before he was assassinated, in 1995. These stickers had no alarm systems to go with them; they simply showed that the owner had paid protection money. In an example of the new government's deter-

mination to fight crime, these stickers were recently banned.

The security agencies have been highly visible, but they are minor compared with the more strategic assets of the groupings, such as energy firms, sports and tourist facilities, food-processing companies, and the agricultural import-export market. The groupings gained control of that market, according to Nikolov, through "beatings, kidnappings, and assassinations." He writes, "The largest 'economic groups' sometimes bear an uncanny resemblance to the state itself: they maintain giant security, intelligence, and data processing departments." In other words, just as increasingly powerful multinational corporations may indicate the evolution of one kind of political form, crime-based oligarchies in the former Communist world may indicate the evolution of another. Both forms derive from the triumph of global capitalism.

THE groupings impoverished the Bulgarian state by establishing suspect joint ventures with state enterprises through which any profits were priva-



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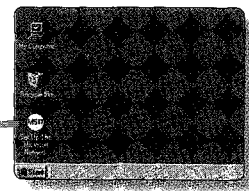
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tized and all losses were nationalized. Essentially, the scam worked by allowing the groupings to supply their partner state enterprises with expensive raw materials and to buy back finished products at below-market rates. Meanwhile, the groupings financed these joint ventures and kept the loss-making enterprises afloat through the use of loans that, by agreement with corrupt officials, were never paid back. (The failure to repay large

*Bulgarians now
comprehend how even
with a stable democratic
government their
society might remain
uncivil.*

loans, of course, helped to fuel inflation and later hyperinflation.) Even though such schemes are under attack by a newly aggressive Interior Ministry and the IMF, they allowed the groupings to acquire enough capital to enter the lucrative field of compact-disc pirating, and to make inroads into legitimate enterprises with long-term possibilities—for example, the energy sector.

DZU, an affiliate of Multigroup, controlled a significant percentage of the Bulgarian compact-disc market. Documents show that DZU was connected to Intercom, a foreign-registered company, which was in turn connected to Overgas, a Multigroup firm with strong links to Gazprom, the huge Russian energy monopoly once run by the former Russian Prime Minister Viktor Stepanovitch Chernomyrdin. Thus pirated compact discs left Bulgaria in planes owned by Gazprom, though Gazprom denies that it knew of or consented to this use of its planes.

A recent diplomatic dispute between Bulgaria and Russia illuminates the close relationship between the Bulgarian groupings and the Kremlin, a relationship that has worked against the Bulgarian state. Bulgaria is largely dependent on natural gas that is shipped from Rus-

sia through a pipeline whose ownership was originally divided between Russia and Bulgaria. Gazprom came to control not only the Russian half but also the Bulgarian half, through Overgas and other companies associated with the groupings. The Bulgarian government demanded control over its share of the pipeline. But the Kremlin, backing Multigroup and its allies, objected, and threatened to curtail Bulgaria's energy supplies if the Sofia government did not yield. Foreign diplomats note that the Russian threat to deny gas to Bulgaria began after Bulgaria formally applied for membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, in March of last year.

The bond between the Bulgarian groupings and the Russians exists on three levels: strong economic connections, which have evolved out of Party connections forged in the Communist era, when Bulgaria was the most subservient satellite; crime connections that have grown out of the strong links between the KGB and Bulgaria's Communist-era security service; and more general connections among criminals which are fostered by the similarity of the two Slavic languages. The interrelationships are most apparent in Varna and other Bulgarian Black Sea ports, which have become hangouts and transportation hubs for Russian criminals. What makes Bulgaria particularly vulnerable to Russian organized crime is that in Bulgaria, for reasons not only linguistic but also historical (for example, Czar Alexander II liberated Bulgaria from the Turks in 1878), Russians as a people are liked, even though Russian communism was not. (In other ex-Communist states, such as Hungary and Romania, Russians are detested.)

BULGARIANS have an acute sense of tragedy and irony—the very stuff of history. A kingdom that was one of the most advanced in medieval Europe, from which in the ninth century the monks Cyril and Methodius spread the Cyrillic alphabet north, Bulgaria was brutally occupied for five centuries by the Ottoman Turks and later endured half a century of economic servitude under Russian communism. Bulgarians now comprehend how even with a stable democratic government their society might remain uncivil, as they themselves be-

come victims of a new and subtle brand of Russian imperialism. “Our big fear,” Atanas Paporizov, a former Minister of Trade, told me, “is that, yet again, no one in the West will pay attention to us. We will be forgotten at the end of the Balkans and occupied by companies that, shall we say, don’t always pay their taxes.”

“I am a strong believer in the power of psychological truths,” President Stoyanov told me. “And now we badly need encouragement from the West, for we have made a civilizational choice to be part of NATO. There are those here who vividly remember Yalta [the conference at which, in 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt opened the door to Soviet domination of Eastern Europe]. Because of Yalta and the Iron Curtain, Western investors knew more about Sri Lanka than about Central and Eastern Europe. And Yalta was not predetermined—it did not have to happen that way.”

This time, too, the outcome is unclear, at least as of this writing. A battle is quietly raging between Western-style parliamentary institutions and neocommunism in the form of oligarchical crime groups. Public opinion and the degree to which people, especially the elite, resist these groupings will turn on NATO enlargement. If Bulgaria is denied NATO membership and the West continues to allow Milosevich's Serbs to dominate Kosovo, the elite will understand that individual survival may depend on compromise with Russian-influenced crime groups.

Whereas Russian influence in Bulgaria is felt mostly through corruption, American influence is felt through the new consumer culture and liberal institutions—notably the American University in Bulgaria, at Blagoevgrad, in the southwest. At the university, founded in 1991 and affiliated with the University of Maine, students from all over the former Communist world are educated in an American setting. It is probably the only place in the world where Serbs and Albanians—at violent loggerheads in Kosovo—not only sit together but are good friends. These students see themselves as part of an enlightened global intelligentsia. If this institution and others like it in Bulgaria are to remain secure, democracy and the other forces of the West will have to fight harder than they have done. ☸

DECEMBER
1998

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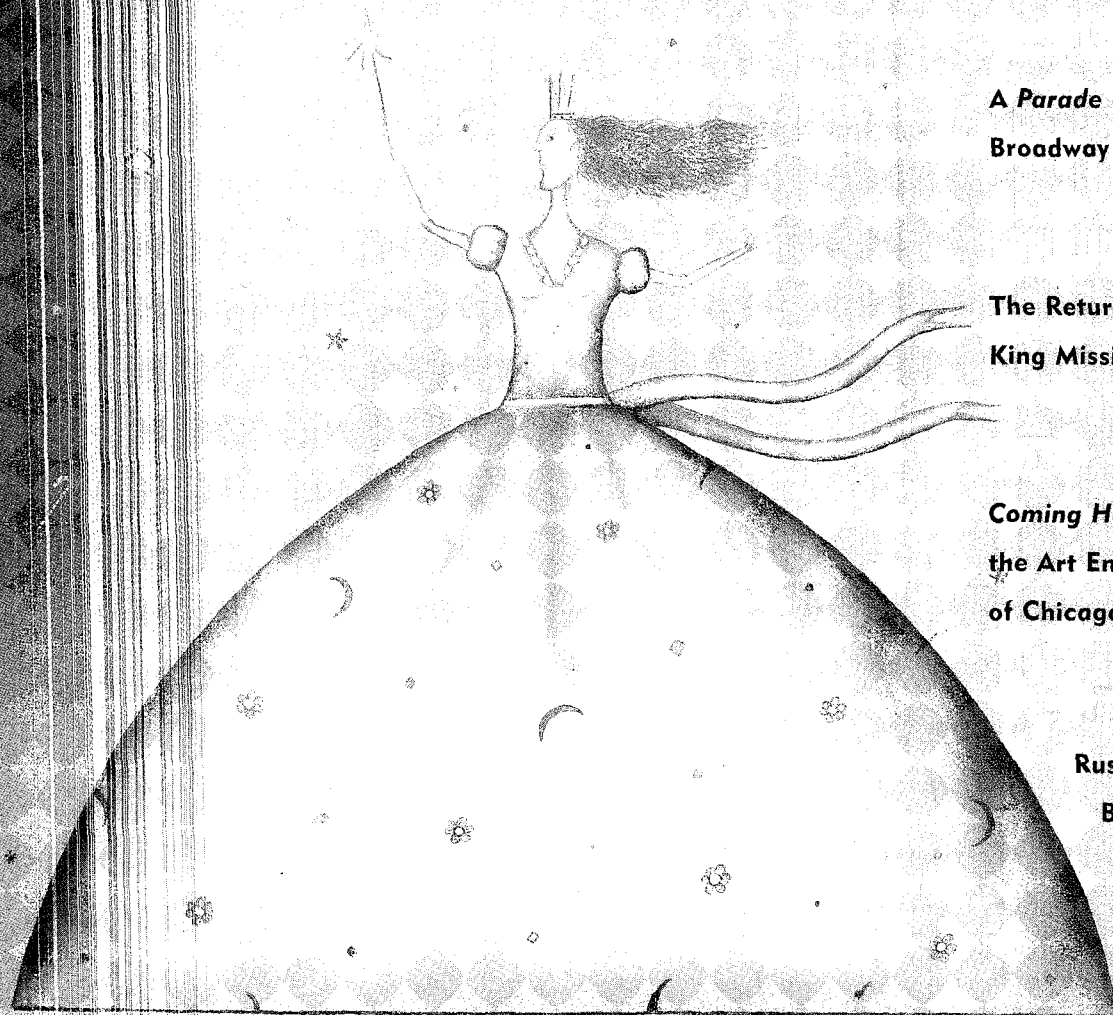
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Dance and Theater

BY NANCY DALVA AND JOHN ISEL

UP, UP, AND AWAY

In December the dance world goes Nuts, on stages large and small, in cities major and minor. Just like the little girl in the familiar story (Clara, as she is usually called, or sometimes Marie), children go out into the winter night and have an adventure in which they watch people dance. Onstage, Clara falls asleep and has a dream, encompassing an entire act of ballet divertissements involving foodstuffs. In their seats in the theater, children try to stay awake, eat sweets at intermission, and watch the same things Clara does. One of the most enchanting versions of *The Nutcracker* belongs to The Joffrey Ballet of Chicago (The Auditorium Theatre, Chicago, November 27–December 13, Ticketmaster 312-902-1500; Orange County Performing Arts Center, Costa Mesa, December 23, 24, 26, 27, 714-556-2787.) This particular *Nutcracker* is a very dear one, with about a hundred local children included at each venue, though not, thank Santa and all his reindeer, as principals. Although



The Sugar Plum Fairies

oddly cobbled together (Joffrey, dying, was issuing directives from a hospital bed), it has a lovely coherence. Like Balanchine's version, it is deeply felt; embedded in the fairy tale are correspondences to the life of Robert Joffrey and how he felt about the season, the setting, and the stage. Christmas was his favorite holiday, and Victorian New York a favorite place, with a favored set of manners; the stage was his home, and his heart. When, at the ballet's end, Clara leaves the land of enchantment, she departs not with her Prince but with Drosselmeyer, the mysterious magician who has sparked her midnight dreaming. Surprisingly, a wonderful hot-air balloon lands; in they step. Here is Robert Joffrey resolutely Americanizing ballet's Christmas rite as only an immigrant's son would want to (Dorothy! Kansas! MGM!), waving good-bye to us all and saying, I pulled the levers behind the ballet's curtains; I was the wizard; Merry Christmas! Farewell!

—N.D.

SHAW'S TALKING CURE

Although George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* had its premiere eighty-five years ago, most of the world knows his tale of the flower girl Eliza Doolittle and her pug-nacious phonetics professor Henry Higgins as the musical *My Fair Lady*. But the Seattle Repertory Theatre and the director Sharon Ott will reacquaint audiences with Shaw's original through December 20. *Pygmalion* offers—along with its political implications about class divisions, gender roles, and scientific enlightenment, and its humor—a different perspective on the notion of “redemption,” a soporific theme this



SRT artistic director Sharon Ott

month owing to the ubiquitous *Christmas Carol*. Shaw's little morality play holds up remarkably well, partly because of its insistence on not giving in to audiences' romantic yearning to yoke together the two main characters (Shaw wrote a lengthy afterword to justify his ending). Henry literally has the last guffaw (“He roars with laughter as the play ends,” according to the stage directions), and so the play suddenly becomes not only about Eliza's transformation but about Higgins's lack of one. It's the epitome of a Shavian grace note, reminding us that often amid the merriment, not all is well.

—J.I.

EXECUTION OF JUSTICE?

In August of 1915 a low-tech lynching mesmerized the state of Georgia. About two dozen angry men pulled Leo Frank, a twenty-nine-year-old Jewish pencil-factory manager, from his prison hospital bed and drove him to a tree in Marietta. They stood him on a table, slipped a noose around his neck, and yanked the table away. For poor whites, “Judge Lynch” provided justice for the murder of a fourteen-year-old factory worker, Mary Phagan: the governor had commuted Frank's death sentence to life imprisonment, owing to shaky evidence. Now this sad chapter of American anti-Semitism has become a Broadway musical. With a book by Alfred Uhry (*Driving Miss Daisy*, *The Last Night of Ballyhoo*) and staging by the director Harold Prince, winner of twenty Tony Awards, *Parade* is in previews at Lincoln Center Theater, in New York, until it opens on December 17. Because of its creators' stature, *Parade*, produced by the



The creators of *Parade*

Canadian production company Livent, may be Broadway's most anticipated show since *Ragtime*, Livent's previous foray. The question is whether the young composer-lyricist Jason Robert Brown can provide a score that soars. So far, he has earned high marks with everything he's touched off-Broadway, whether as a songwriter (*Songs for a New World*, available on CD from RCA/Victor), an arranger/orchestrator (*Dinah Was*), or a musical director (*When Pigs Fly*). Surely any incipient talent that can enliven the musical stage deserves a parade.

—J.I.

Nancy Dalva is the author of *Dance Ink*; Photographs. John Isel is the editor-in-chief at Stagebill.

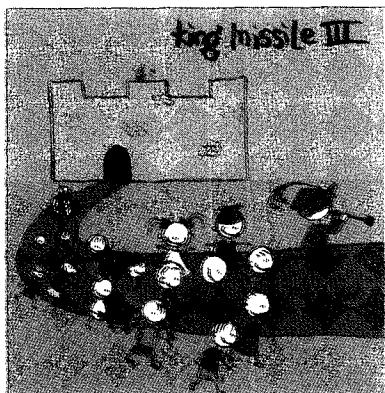
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Popular Music and Jazz

BY BOB BLUMENTHAL AND CHARLES M. YOUNG



UNHAPPILY EVER AFTER

King Missile III, the latest version of King Missile, both returns and debuts with *Failure* (Shimmy Disc). What returns is front man John S. Hall, a performance artist who ruminates on the oddest topics. What debuts is various backup musicians, culled from New York's "downtown" scene, playing an assortment of percussion, violins, cellos, and electronic gadgets. So this is not your typical rock band with a vocalist shrieking to be heard over the guitar wash and cymbal crashes. This is a comedian-philosopher talking over musical weirdness. You can't dance or bang your head to it. You can only listen, in which case you may well laugh. The title track, a satire on the self-help and New Age shelves at Barnes & Noble, resonates especially well in this era of scandal, hysteria, and financial collapse: "Failure wants you to be proud of your lack of accomplishments/Failure wants you to own your own incompetence." The power of negative thinking emerges as a motif ("Darkness and misery, like two little birdies/Flying and fluttering round my head/Flapping their wings like relentless anguish/Singing sweet tweety songs of despair and futility") but is far from Hall's only concern. He wishes he could chant like a Tibetan monk who can hit two notes simultaneously, "because God really sits up and takes notice when you sing chords," and he tells stories with incredibly unhappy endings, like "The Little Sandwich That Got a Guilt Complex Because He Was the Sole Survivor of a Horrible Bus Crash." In "Gay/Not Gay" he gleefully stomps on all gender delineation, and what else do you need from an album? Some of the language is gamey, but so is the front page of *The New York Times* these days.

—C.M.Y.

OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BÆBES

They call themselves Mediæval Bæbes, a fine joke and maybe even a good marketing ploy for their album, *Salva Nos* (Virgin). The music is indeed medieval, and the twelve people singing it are indeed, well, babes. The music is not, however, a joke. It is beautiful and ancient and completely serious and possessed of a certain juice that probably derives from the fact that the twelve babes include dancers and systems analysts and former members of Miranda Sex Garden, a band that also explored the old in search of the new. In other words, this isn't just a dry exercise in academic musico-archaeology. The



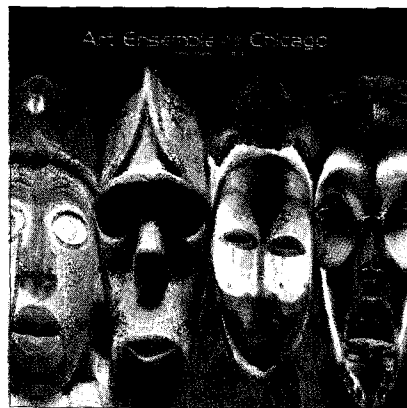
Mediæval Bæbes

Bæbes mix the sacred and profane traditions, they mix Latin and Middle English and French, with rock-and-roll freedom and without ever straying far from the fourteenth century. Many of the songs are a capella, highlighting the unique energy that emanates from same-sex choirs. On the rest the instrumentation is simple and stark, relying mostly on percussion with highlights from the occasional recorder, dulcimer, or hurdy-gurdy, somewhat reminiscent of Carl Orff (another modern medievalist) in its drive. You can hear the Mediæval Bæbes on the soundtrack of the movie *Elizabeth* as well.

—C.M.Y.

PARTY ARTY

Art Ensemble of Chicago trumpeter Lester Bowie once remarked that he would not play "People in Sorrow," the AEC's 1969 masterpiece of spontaneous form and hushed-to-hectoring collective improvisation, at a party. The new *Coming Home Jamaica* (Atlantic), in contrast, should be a partygoer's delight. Bowie's point—that music serves diverse purposes—is borne out by this infectious, often danceable collection from a band that has spent more than three decades emphasizing its first name. Originally the Roscoe Mitchell Art Ensemble, featuring Mitchell on saxophone, Malachi Favors on bass, and Bowie, the group became the Art Ensemble of Chicago after an early European sojourn, when Famoudou Don Moye's drums were added. The AEC has always bent jazz structure and sonority with avant-garde zeal plus a flair for history, theatricality, and humor. *Jamaica* achieves these with a more populist veneer that high-



lights the strengths of each member. Opening salvos of R&B and reggae are propelled by the earth-moving force of Favors's bass lines and the crisp, fluent range of percussion commanded by Moye. Bowie emerges as the music progresses, alternately buffing and smudging phrases with one of the most expressive trumpet sounds in history, moving almost surreptitiously into the abstract realm where the soprano sax of Mitchell, the band's guiding theorist, uncovers the conjunction of lyricism and angularity; then the beat returns, and the band struts out. No wonder the Art Ensemble of Chicago, ignored by record companies for most of the nineties, remains one of jazz's most celebrated units.

—B.B.

Bob Blumenthal is a jazz critic for *The Boston Globe*. Charles M. Young reviews popular music for *Playboy*, *Musican*, and other publications.

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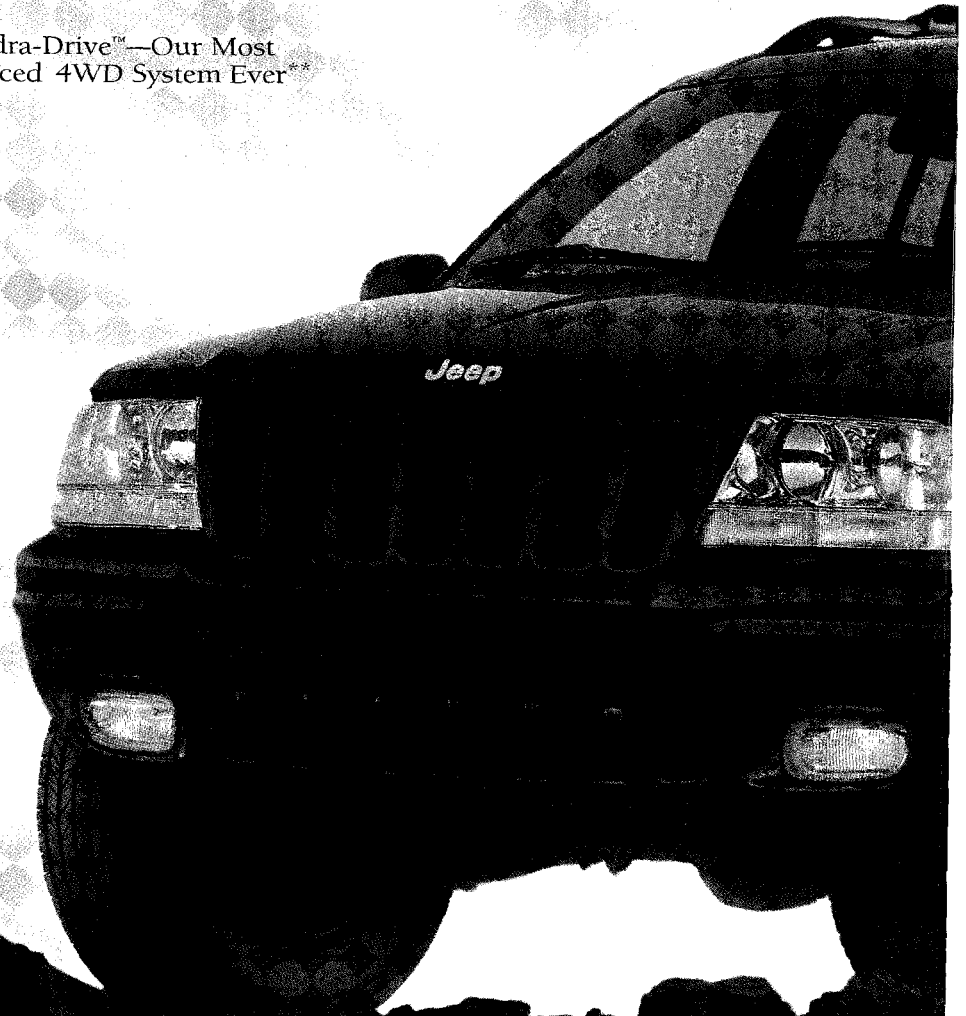
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Film

BY ELLA TAYLOR

SECOND FIDDLE

The dramatic life and tragically early death from multiple sclerosis of British cellist Jacqueline Du Pré could lend themselves all too easily to the lazy narrative arc of the disease-of-the-week movie. In *Hilary and Jackie* the director Anand Tucker admirably sidesteps this trap by framing his movie in Du Pré's tumultuous relationship with her older sister, a seesaw dance of siblings unmatched in talent or temperament but telepathically close in their devotion to each other. Written with brio by Frank Cottrell Boyce, and directed by Tucker with a mischievously inventive visual élan, the film traces the sisters' childhood in the 1950s, dominated by music lessons and competitions, through young adulthood, when Jackie (Emily Watson) begins to outstrip Hilary (Rachel Griffiths). When Hilary settles for a stable life with minor-league conductor Kiffer Finzi (David Morrissey), Jackie impulsively follows suit by marrying the charismatic but aloof Israeli conductor Daniel Barenboim (James Frain). Emotionally ill-equipped for either marriage or the stresses of the international concert circuit, the tempestuous Jackie becomes a monster to her long-suffering sister. About halfway through, the movie loops gracefully back on itself to blame Jackie's excesses—in part—on the illness that creeps up on her. Yet *Hilary and Jackie* never succumbs to easy causality. Watson gives an impressively volatile rendition of Jackie, but she has the easy part compared with Griffiths, who, in a brilliantly modulated portrayal of the less showy Hilary, voices the film's crucial insight. "If you think being an ordinary person is any less difficult than being an extraordinary one," she cries when her sister has gone one betrayal too far, "you're wrong."



Emily Watson as Jackie



Nick Nolte and Sissy Spacek

Like last year's *Welcome to Sarajevo*, a new film by Serbian director Predrag "Gaga" Antonijevic dramatizes the wars in the former Yugoslavia through the rescue of a child by a previously disengaged individual from the West. Irritating though it is to have every foreign event shaped by the heroism of an American, it's unlikely that *Savior* would have been made, let alone seen in the United States, without some major Hollywood names attached and Oliver Stone headlining the producers. In the movie an American soldier (Dennis Quaid), numbed by the death of his beloved wife (Nastassja Kinski) and son and his own savage retaliation, changes his name to the generic "Guy" and, along with his best friend (Stellan Skars-

Dennis Quaid in *Savior*

gard), turns mercenary for the Serbian faction in Bosnia. He finds himself on a journey through the war-torn region with an outcast Serbian woman (Nastasa Ninkovic) who has given birth to a Muslim baby girl. *Savior* is not a subtle film (the scenes of violence are devastatingly graphic), but neither are the conditions it describes. Though hobbled by Robert Orr's stagy screenplay, the movie is appropriately troubling and moving—as far as it goes. In its effort to avoid stepping

on any political toes, *Savior* suffers from the limitations that afflict any story focusing on the universal aspects of war: we learn much about what we already knew—that war is hell—while understanding little about the specifics of this war.

PAINKILLERS

Novelist Russell Banks's somber concerns—small-town corruption, the legacies of pain passed down in families undermined by alcoholism and abuse—are a magnet for filmmakers who are drawn to life's darker corners. Although it's structured like a murder mystery, Paul Schrader's adaptation of Banks's 1989 novel *Affliction* is a quietly devastating character study of a divorced New Hampshire cop, Wade Whitehouse (played by Nick Nolte—who better?), whose every effort to live a decent life with his girlfriend, Margie (Sissy Spacek), is thwarted by the legacy of a childhood spent defending himself and his younger brother, Rolfe (Willem Dafoe), against their bullying drunkard of a father, Glen (James Coburn). When a prominent weekend on a hunting trip is found shot to death, Wade's suspicions lead him to a course of action that inflames all his "afflictions"—from a chronic toothache, to his futile battle for

custody of his daughter, to his unabated rage against his enfeebled father. In lesser hands the line drawn from the sins of the father to those of the son might seem pat. Coburn and Nolte give marvelously abrasive performances, the vicious symbiosis of their characters underscored by flashbacks to the days that shaped the warped perspective of Wade, a good man driven to terrible deeds.

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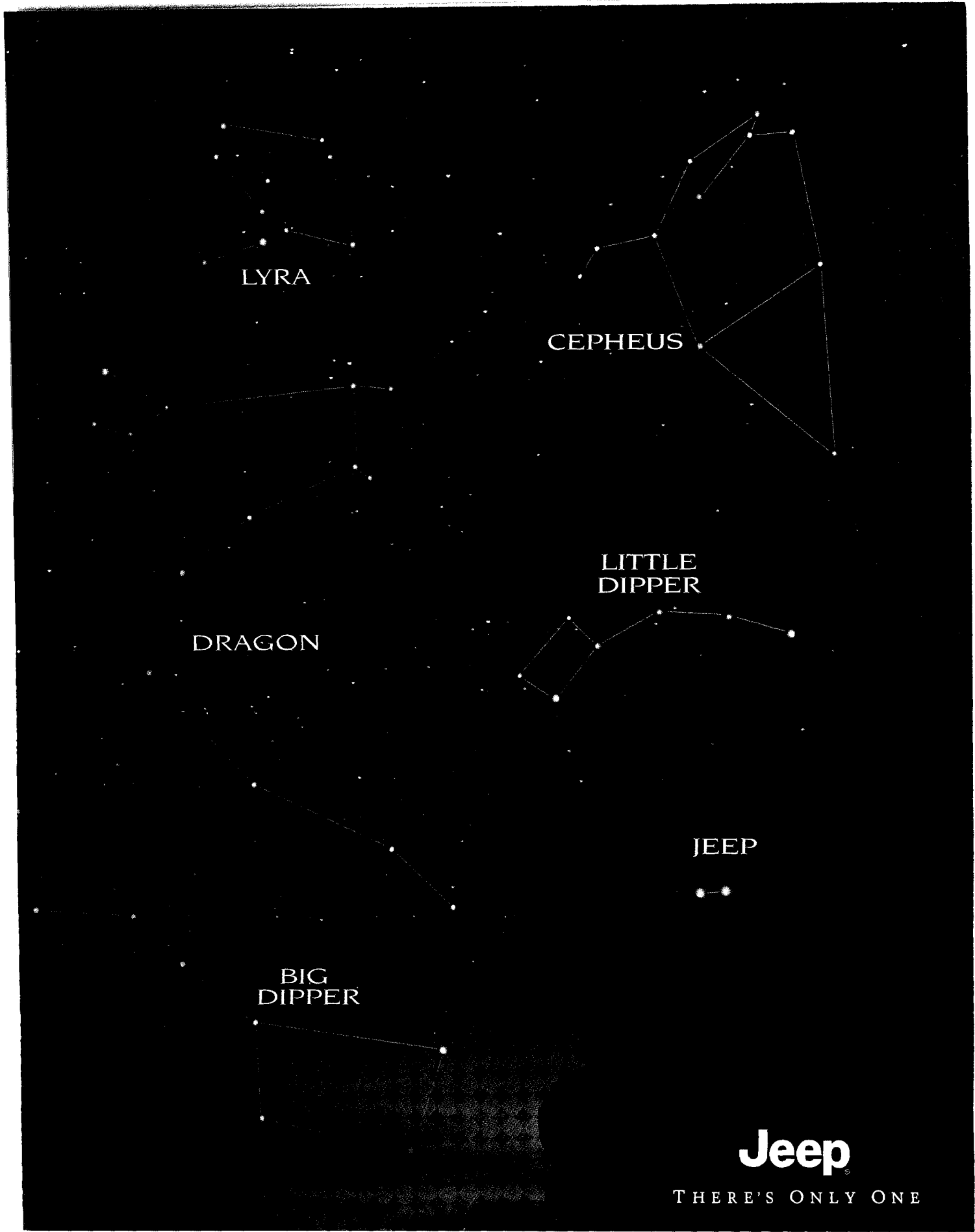
This December tune in to *Biography*, the A&E Network's Emmy-award-winning documentary series, to meet the people you thought you knew. Hosts Peter Graves and Jack Perkins explore the lives of fascinating people—from Leonardo Di Caprio to Nelson Rockefeller. Jeep is proud to sponsor *Biography* and to bring you this edition of the Arts & Entertainment Preview.

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Ella Taylor is a film critic for LA Weekly.



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DAVID BALL/TONY STONE

An Old-fashioned Christmas

The holiday brings out the best in Austria—and vice versa

AUSTRIA can seem solemn and closed to a first-time visitor, but at year's end it comes fully alive. Cities and towns are continuous music festivals, and the usually banklike hours of shops comfortably dilate to match those of the open-air markets that spring up during the four weeks

by **Corby Kummer**

of Advent. Most cities have a feverish Christmastime gaiety. But Salzburg and Vienna retain their composure while being at their most welcoming. I attribute this to the Catholicism that runs deep. In Austria a basic piety, rather than commercialism, seems to underlie the nearly constant activity. As a

Jew who grew up not celebrating what has by now become a largely ecumenical holiday, I was moved, when I visited during Advent last year, by the emphasis on the homemade over the store-bought, and by the very merchandise for sale at the markets: simple toys, ornaments, and decorations meant to enhance time spent together at home.

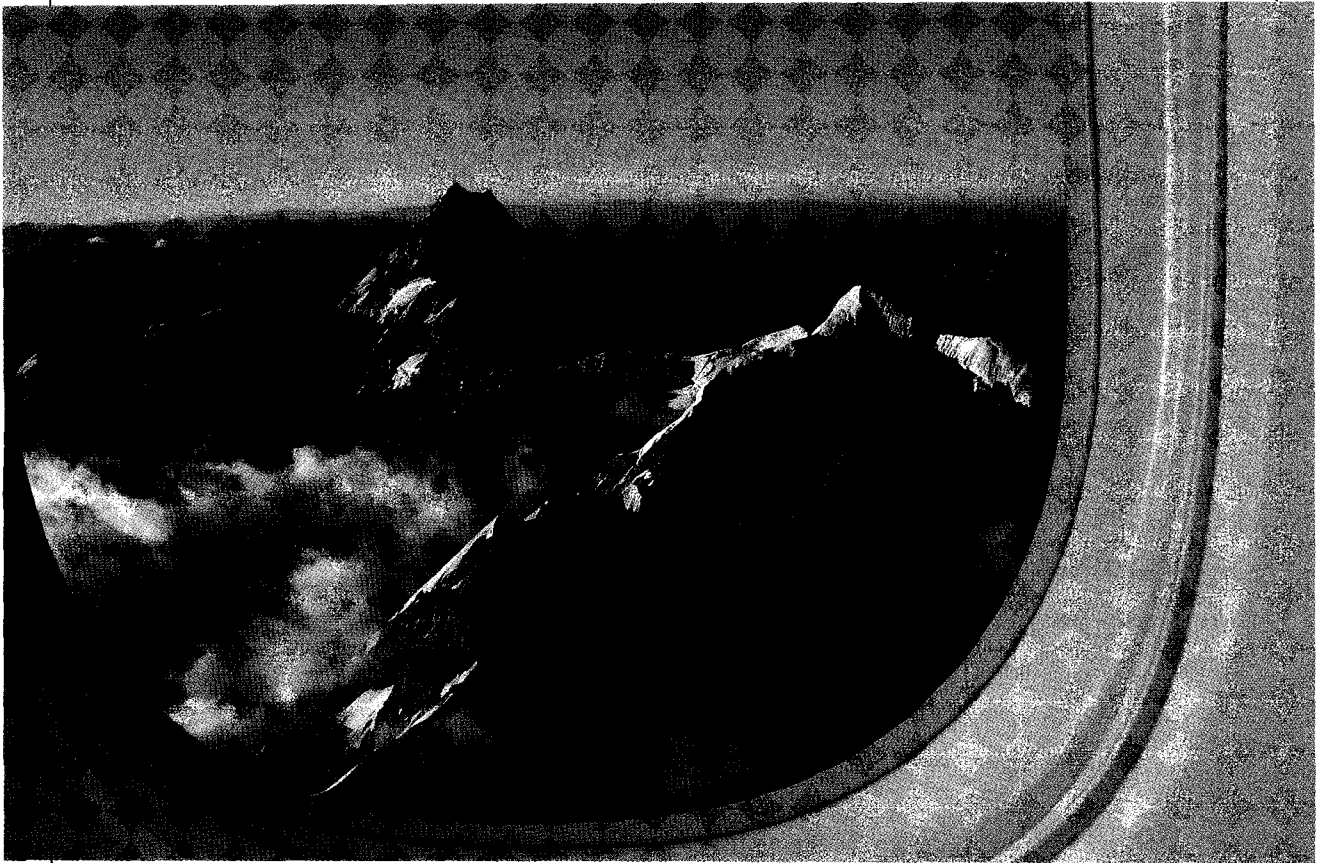
Aside from the open face that Austria presents during December, several things mark it as an obvious choice for Christmas visitors. True, Germany may be able to lay claim to more Christmas music, and it has a longer history of decorating the evergreen Christmas tree. But Austria vigorously adopted these traditions, and southern Germany and Austria are still the places to find echt candlelit trees, ribbons and boughs on the windows, and carols sung in the cold. (Although I did see a few snowflakes last December, the weather required a lined raincoat rather than a parka and warm woolen mittens.)

A German living in Vienna once explained to me why he prefers to be in Austria at any time of year: the food is better. On Christmas Day goose and venison may be the centerpieces, but throughout the season shoppers fortify themselves by stepping into a bar-café for a quick sandwich or a sausage or a warm buttered roll or a salt stick or, of course, a coffee and one of what are probably the world's best pastries. Much of Austrian cuisine originated in other countries that were part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The multi-layered tortes synonymous with Vienna were probably borrowed from Italy, and strudel from Turkey via Hungary. But they reached their apotheoses in the skilled and competitive hands of court-inspired Viennese bakers, and it remains impossible anywhere else to find so many cakes and pastries made so well.

Perhaps in no other country is seasonal celebrating so codified and sustained. If you can't visit Salzburg or Vienna on an Advent weekend, the height of the Christmas markets and concerts, and if you don't have the fortitude to face the crowds in Vienna at New Year's, rest as-

Salzburg's Getreidegasse

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sured that the cultural programs continue well into January, and so does the good cheer. (The Austrian National Tourist Office, at 212-944-6880, or at www.anto.com, can provide a great deal of information on accommodations, events, and the country's famous ski slopes, for instance those near Innsbruck and Kitzbühel.)

"I spent the holidays in Rome once," a friend from an Austrian family told me while enumerating the many things I should do during my visit to Austria. "I was so annoyed. They simply have no idea about Christmas."

SALZBURG is, of course, the birthplace of Mozart, and his image and works are inescapable there. Almost every night during Advent a concert in the vast fortress complex above the city features his music, and smaller churches offer more-intimate settings for music; in late January a week-long festival commemorates his birthday. Midway between the city center and the fortress is the loveliest small church—at Nonnberg, the abbey where Maria Kutschera lived as a novice before being sent off to be the Von Trapp choir mistress. I did not take a tour of the many places in and around Salzburg that were used during the filming of *The Sound of Music*, but I admit to having been thrilled one morning when I was the only visitor to the abbey church and an unseen female choir suddenly started singing. Mozart dominates even the narrow, pedestrians-only main shopping street, Getreidegasse, which bristles with wrought-iron and gilded-wood shop signs. His birthplace, a modest fourth-floor apartment midway along the street, is advertised with lettering across the wide yellow-stucco façade that makes the building resemble a department store.

Part of the passing Getreidegasse parade on a December afternoon might be a group of young men fantastically dressed as Perchten—multipurpose figures from Germanic mythology who are said to drive away bad spirits and to

reawaken the dormant pre-winter earth by stamping life and light back into it. Around Saint Nicholas Day, December 6, the Perchten, dressed in animal-skin suits and horned masks, are called Krampus; parents warn their children that the Krampus will take them away if they don't behave. Figures dressed in gorilla suits occasionally stomp down Getreidegasse in a cloud of dry-ice vapor, loudly ringing cowbells and making gestures as if to snatch small children (or, perhaps, laggardly shoppers); Saint Nicholas follows behind, genially passing out sweets.

A Christmas market spreads under arcades leading from Getreidegasse into several small courtyards and plazas. Food and drink are as much a part of the markets as handicrafts, ornaments, decorations, and toys. The principal foodstuff to buy is Lebkuchen, a hard gingerbread baked in elaborately incised wooden molds and often used as a Christmas decoration. To snack on there are thick slices of dark bread covered with smoky home-cured ham or salted *Schmalz*—which in Austria means lard, not chicken fat, and is the spread of choice.

On the Sunday I arrived in Salzburg, the Lion's Club was operating one of the



For Advent, an all-Mozart ensemble

many tented booths at the central Residenz Christkindlmarkt, and Salzburger greeted friends from nearby towns who had come in to shop and lend a hand. Many were dressed in the *Trachten*, or folk costumes, they had worn to church, some with embroidered shirts beneath gray-and-green loden jackets and coats. Nearly every shopper at a Christkindlmarkt stops for a cup of fruit tea, mulled Glühwein, or wine-spiked fruit *Punsch*;

SYLVAN GRANDAM/TONY STONE



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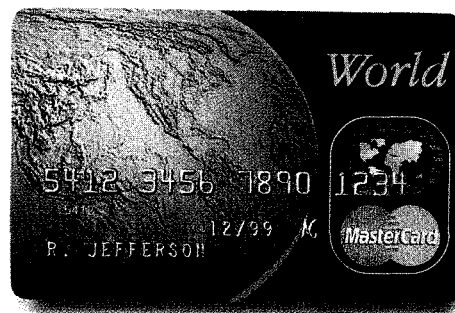


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their orangey, spicy fragrances practically define the markets.

One woman told me that the booth she runs is her avocation: she does business only twenty-six days a year, but attends gift shows and plans her Christmas-market merchandise the rest of the year. I admired the hand-painted glass ornaments she had bought in Vienna, the Latvian linens she had found at a Frankfurt fair, and the scented clay ornaments she had molded using her collection of folk-art stamps. The centerpieces of gilded poppy pods, dried fruit, and cinnamon sticks tied with red-plaid ribbon, though, seemed inspired more by Martha Stewart than by any rustic tradition. Along with the kitsch that devolves from all folk art, this blending of the authentic and the contrived typifies the markets.

A decorous but distinct battle is taking place concerning the city's most famous contribution to Christmas—"Silent Night." The hymn was first sung at the 1818 Christmas Eve mass in the church of Oberndorf, a village about twenty miles from Salzburg, with guitar accom-

paniment by Joseph Mohr, the parish priest, and Franz Gruber, a local schoolmaster and church organist, singing bass. Mohr wrote the words, and Gruber has long been considered the composer, and two places Gruber lived are now museums. On Advent Sundays busloads of tourists file into Silent Night Square in Oberndorf to hear choirs render the song in Silent Night Chapel.

Several years ago an assistant film producer named Hanno Schilf, taken by the story of Mohr (an illegitimate child who was educated by the Church in recognition of the musical talent that made him an invaluable choir member), decided to research "Silent Night." He concluded that Mohr had as much to do with the music as Gruber did, if not everything; in the text of a flyer distributed by the tourist office Schilf demoted the presumed composer to arranger. Schilf rented rooms in the small Salzburg house where Mohr was born, found and installed homespun furnishings of the kind that a poor but industrious household would contain, and opened his own Silent

Night museum in time for the 1996 Salzburg Festival.

A natural actor, Schilf explains his views on Mohr's life and the carol while serving visitors coffee and homemade Kipferl, the addictive crumbly vanilla-and-ground-nut cookies that nearly every Austrian family makes during Advent and automatically offers to guests. Schilf is not only protective of Mohr and prickly about the pro-Gruber forces; he has written his own story of the carol—"Franz warned Joseph to be careful and showed him a whole new dimension of his personality, an opportunistic side"—and had the small book translated into seven languages. A multi-part documentary about the carol was recently shown on Austrian television and is to be condensed into a feature film that, Schilf says, will be the biggest thing to come out of Salzburg since *The Sound of Music*.

IN Vienna, Advent is mostly a countdown to New Year's, when the open plaza around St. Stephen's Cathedral, in the heart of the city, is another Times Square. Crowds are so tightly packed that movement becomes involuntary, and Italian is as likely to be spoken as German—Italians, too, seem to think that Austrians have better ideas about the holidays, to judge by the annual "invasion" some Viennese describe. The opera has special performances and, in February, its famous ball, a boon to formal-wear-rental businesses. Fortunately, concerts and operas continue in the weeks after the crowds leave. (If you'd like to attend the opera, a concierge should be able to help; he or she might even be able to snare a ticket to one of the city's many balls, which mostly take place between New Year's Eve and Shrove Tuesday.)

But the Viennese by no means scant Christmas; they even devote a Web site, www.Christkindlmarkt.at, to it. I toured many of the Christmas markets; the one with the most charming setting was in Spittelberg—an arty neighborhood just beyond the Ring whose intimate and elegant neoclassical houses, built in the mid-nineteenth-century Biedermeier period, have recently been restored by young professionals. Both the neighborhood and the market have a bohemian feel. Booths feature the carved leather, crystals, and health food (organic Lebkuchen) also stocked by local shops, and the people



SYLVAIN GRANDADAM/TONY STONE

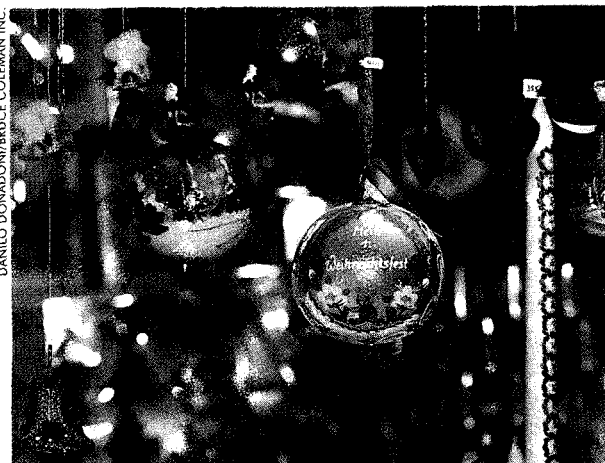
The annual Opera Ball is the pinnacle of Vienna's waltz season

behind the counters are likelier to wear tie-dyed T-shirts and love beads than *Trachten*. The three parallel streets on which the market is centered become a kind of open house, with cafés, bars, galleries, shops, and performance spaces (for mimes, clowns, and avant-garde two-character plays) keeping the same long

\$187; telephone 011-43-662-889-77-351.)

In the middle of Vienna I found a Christmas wonderland—a distillation of the beauty of holiday folk traditions—all in one store. Tostmann *Trachten* is the profitable labor of love of Gesiene Tostmann, who in the twenty-five years since she took over a store her parents started

has helped to keep artisanry alive all over Austria. The cellar and ground floor feature handmade clothes and home furnishings, and the second floor is Tostmann's own folk-art museum, in which one room is equipped as a dry-goods general store from the Biedermeier era and other rooms are decorated with period furniture, costumes, and folk art.



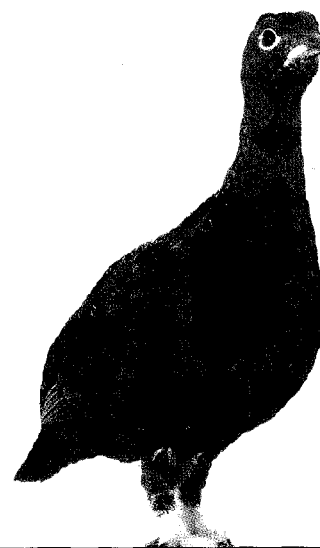
Hand-painted wares are artfully displayed

hours as the market, and young people with big plastic cups of Glühwein or beer crisscrossing the streets. In the evening the outdoor picnic tables where shoppers can eat sausage and other snacks become as crowded and jolly as those in Grinzing, a suburb famous for its patchwork of gardens in which people drink new wine when the weather turns nice.

Spittelberg is also the site of my favorite hotel in Vienna, the Altstadt, a 1905 apartment building with twenty-five high-ceilinged rooms and four small suites, each decorated in a different and nicely unprecious style. The owner, Otto Wiesenthal, a former art dealer and the descendant of an artistic Viennese family, distributes a tiny and invaluable brochure about his favorite restaurants, cafés, bars, and "hide aways," sorted by price and neighborhood and even by what kind of crowd to expect. Wiesenthal told me that he wrote it to avoid repeating the information to guests every day; the guide is available in English online at www.altstadt.at/guide.htm. The Altstadt is at least a ten-minute walk from most tourist sites, but to my mind its homeyness and reasonable price (rooms start at \$120; the telephone number is 011-43-1-526-33-99-0) compensate for the inconvenience. (In Salzburg my choice would be the plush Oesterreicher Hof, where rooms start at

For Christmas the store transforms itself, opening two additional sections of a stone basement and stocking them with ornaments, toys, and decorations you might think weren't being made anymore: painted-glass icicles, snow crystals, locomotives, and log cabins; miniature figures carved from walnut shells; dollhouse-scale farm tools; matchbox train sets; felt slippers; rag dolls; festoons of ingeniously knotted straw stars. One Advent Sunday afternoon I went to a folk-music recital in the largest of the second-floor rooms, where at other times of year Tostmann offers craft classes. Several of the little cellar rooms were serving as candlelit extensions of the upstairs museum, with antique crèches from various regions. The *Trachten*-clad saleswoman who acted as my guide identified herself as a Greek Jew, as curious as I to explore the home of Christmas traditions.

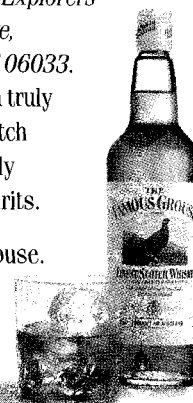
I had invited longtime friends, a Viennese family, to join me at the concert, and they were surprised and enchanted at the variety and authenticity of the goods on display. The father did not lose the occasion to give a gentle reminder of the spirit of Christmas. "No," he said reprovingly to his son, who held up a gilded apple as a potential gift for his sister. "The only kind of gift to give is one you want yourself." ☼



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THE PRISON-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

by ERIC SCHLOSSER

*Correctional officials see danger in prison overcrowding.
Others see opportunity. The nearly two million Americans behind bars—
the majority of them nonviolent offenders—
mean jobs for depressed regions and windfalls for profiteers*

IN the hills east of Sacramento, California, Folsom State Prison stands beside a man-made lake, surrounded by granite walls built by inmate laborers. The gun towers have peaked roofs and Gothic stonework that give the prison the appearance of a medieval fortress, ominous and forbidding. For more than a century Folsom and San Quentin were the end of the line in California's penal system; they were the state's only maximum-security penitentiaries. During the early 1980s, as California's inmate population began to climb, Folsom became dangerously overcrowded. Fights between inmates ended in stabbings six or seven times a week.

The poor sight lines within the old cellblocks put correctional officers at enormous risk. From 1984 to 1994 California built eight new maximum-security (Level 4) facilities. The bullet holes in the ceilings of Folsom's cellblocks, left by warning shots, are the last traces of the prison's violent years. Today Folsom is a medium-security (Level 2) facility, filled with the kind of inmates that correctional officers consider "soft." No one has been stabbed to death at Folsom in almost four years. Among its roughly 3,800 inmates are some 500 murderers, 250 child molesters, and an assortment of rapists, armed robbers, drug dealers, burglars,



and petty thieves. The cells in Housing Unit 1 are stacked five stories high, like boxes in a vast warehouse; glimpses of hands and arms and faces, of flickering TV screens, are visible between the steel bars. Folsom now houses almost twice as many inmates as it was designed to hold. The machine shop at the prison, run by inmates, manufactures steel frames for double bunks—and triple bunks—in addition to license plates.

Less than a quarter mile from the old prison is the California State Prison at Sacramento, known as "New Folsom," which houses about 3,000 Level 4 inmates. They are the real hard cases: violent predators, gang members, prisoners unable to "program" well at other facilities, unable to obey the rules. New Folsom does not have granite walls. It has a "death-wire electrified fence," set between two ordinary chain-link fences, that administers a lethal dose of 5,100 volts at the slightest touch. The architecture of New Folsom is stark and futuristic. The buildings have smooth gray concrete façades, unadorned except for narrow slits for cell windows. Approximately a third of the inmates are serving life sentences; more than a thousand have committed at least one murder, nearly 500 have committed armed robbery, and nearly 200 have committed assault with a deadly weapon.

Inmates were placed in New Folsom while it was still under construction. The prison was badly overcrowded even before it was finished, in 1987. It has at times housed more than 300 inmates in its gymnasiums. New Folsom—like old Folsom, and like the rest of the California prison system—now operates at roughly double its intended capacity. Over the past twenty years the State of California has built twenty-one new prisons, added thousands of cells to existing facilities, and increased its inmate population eightfold. Nonviolent offenders have been responsible for most of that increase. The number of drug offenders imprisoned in the state today is more than twice the number of inmates who were imprisoned for all crimes in 1978. California now has the biggest prison system in the Western industrialized world, a system 40 percent bigger than the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The state holds more inmates in its jails and prisons than do France, Great Britain, Germany, Japan, Singapore, and the Netherlands combined. The California Department of Corrections predicts that at the current rate of expansion, barring a court order that forces a release of prisoners, it will run out of room eighteen months from now. Simply to remain at double capacity the state will need to open at least one new prison a year, every year, for the foreseeable future.

Today the United States has approximately 1.8 million people behind bars: about 100,000 in federal custody, 1.1 million in state custody, and 600,000 in local jails. Prisons hold inmates convicted of federal or state crimes; jails hold people awaiting trial or serving short sentences. The United States now imprisons more people than any other country in the world—perhaps half a million more than Communist China. The American inmate population has grown so large that it is difficult to comprehend: imagine the combined populations of Atlanta, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Des Moines, and Miami behind bars. “We have embarked on a great social experiment,” says Marc Mauer, the author of the upcoming book *The Race to Incarcerate*. “No other society in human history has ever imprisoned so many of its own citizens for the purpose of crime control.” The prison boom in the United States is a recent phenomenon. Throughout the first three quarters of this century the nation’s incarceration rate remained relatively stable, at about 110 prison inmates for every 100,000

people. In the mid-1970s the rate began to climb, doubling in the 1980s and then again in the 1990s. The rate is now 445 per 100,000; among adult men it is about 1,100 per 100,000. During the past two decades roughly a thousand new prisons and jails have been built in the United States. Nevertheless, America’s prisons are more overcrowded now than when the building spree began, and the inmate population continues to increase by 50,000 to 80,000 people a year.

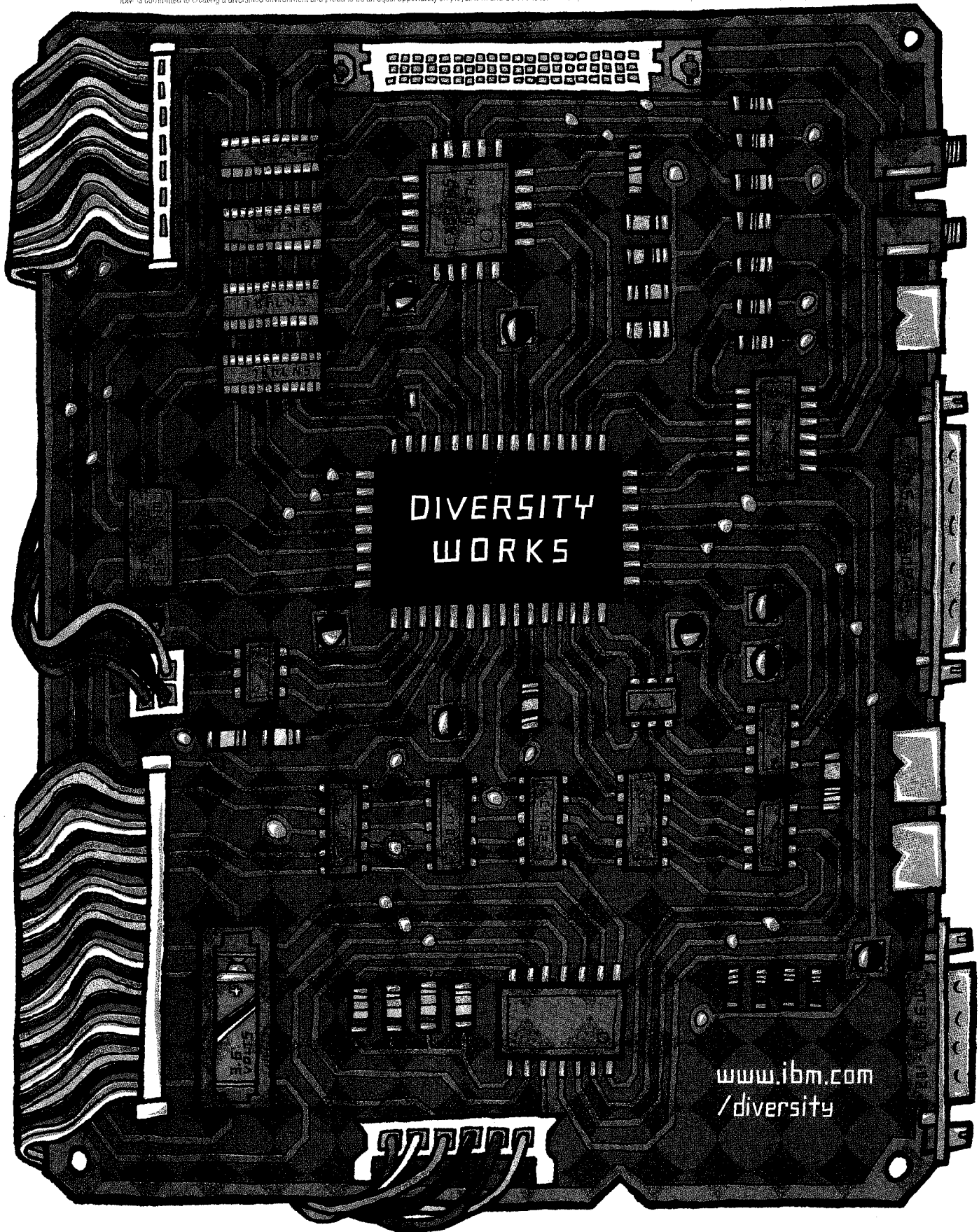
The economist and legal scholar Michael K. Block, who believes that American sentencing policies are still not harsh enough, offers a straightforward explanation for why the United States has lately incarcerated so many people: “There are too many prisoners because there are too many criminals committing too many crimes.” Indeed, the nation’s prisons now hold about 150,000 armed robbers, 125,000 murderers, and 100,000 sex offenders—enough violent criminals to

populate a medium-sized city such as Cincinnati. Few would dispute the need to remove these people from society. The level of violent crime in the United States, despite recent declines, still dwarfs that in Western Europe. But the proportion of offenders being sent to prison each year for violent crimes has actually fallen during the prison boom. In 1980 about half the people entering state prison were violent offenders; in 1995 less than a third had been convicted of a violent crime. The enormous increase in America’s inmate population can be explained in large part by the sentences given to people who have committed nonviolent offenses. Crimes that in other countries would usually lead to community service, fines, or drug treatment—or would not be considered crimes at all—in the United States now lead to a prison term, by far

the most expensive form of punishment. “No matter what the question has been in American criminal justice over the last generation,” says Franklin E. Zimring, the director of the Earl Warren Legal Institute, “prison has been the answer.”

ON January 17, 1961, President Dwight D. Eisenhower used his farewell address to issue a warning, as the United States continued its cold war with the Soviet Union. “In the councils of government,” Eisenhower said, “we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence,

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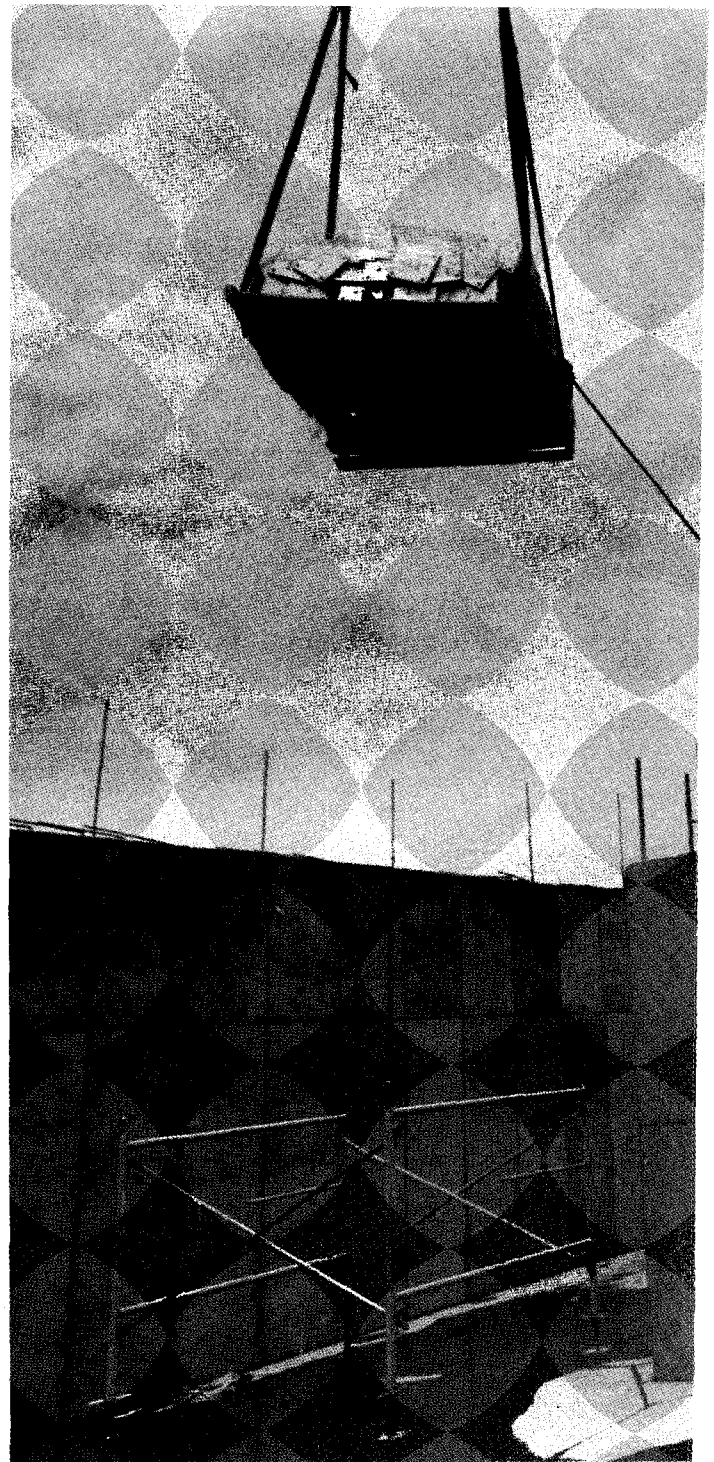
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whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex." Eisenhower had grown concerned about this new threat to democracy during the 1960 campaign, when fears of a "missile gap" with the Soviet Union were whipped up by politicians, the press, and defense contractors hoping for increased military spending. Eisenhower knew that no missile gap existed and that fear of one might lead to a costly, unnecessary response. "The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist," Eisenhower warned. "We should take nothing for granted."

Three decades after the war on crime began, the United States has developed a prison-industrial complex—a set of bureaucratic, political, and economic interests that encourage increased spending on imprisonment, regardless of the actual need. The prison-industrial complex is not a conspiracy, guiding the nation's criminal-justice policy behind closed doors. It is a confluence of special interests that has given prison construction in the United States a seemingly unstoppable momentum. It is composed of politicians, both liberal and conservative, who have used the fear of crime to gain votes; impoverished rural areas where prisons have become a cornerstone of economic development; private companies that regard the roughly \$35 billion spent each year on corrections not as a burden on American taxpayers but as a lucrative market; and government officials whose fiefdoms have expanded along with the inmate population. Since 1991 the rate of violent crime in the United States has fallen by about 20 percent, while the number of people in prison or jail has risen by 50 percent. The prison boom has its own inexorable logic. Steven R. Donziger, a young attorney who headed the National Criminal Justice Commission in 1996, explains the thinking: "If crime is going up, then we need to build more prisons; and if crime is going down, it's because we built more prisons—and building even more prisons will therefore drive crime down even lower."

The raw material of the prison-industrial complex is its inmates: the poor, the homeless, and the mentally ill; drug dealers, drug addicts, alcoholics, and a wide assortment of violent sociopaths. About 70 percent of the prison inmates in the United States are illiterate. Perhaps 200,000 of the country's inmates suffer from a serious mental illness. A generation ago such people were handled primarily by the mental-health, not the criminal-justice, system. Sixty to 80 percent of the American inmate population has a history of substance abuse. Meanwhile, the number of drug-treatment slots in American prisons has declined by more than half since 1993. Drug treatment is now available to just one in ten of the inmates who need it. Among those arrested for violent crimes, the proportion who are African-American men has changed little over the past twenty years. Among those arrested for drug crimes, the proportion who are African-American men has tripled. Although the prevalence of illegal drug use among white men is approximately the same as



that among black men, black men are five times as likely to be arrested for a drug offense. As a result, about half the inmates in the United States are African-American. One out of every fourteen black men is now in prison or jail. One out of every four black men is likely to be imprisoned at some point during his lifetime. The number of women sentenced to a year or more of prison has grown twelvefold since 1970. Of the 80,000 women now imprisoned, about 70 percent are nonviolent offenders. About 75 percent have children.

The prison-industrial complex is not only a set of interest



New prison construction, Franklin County, N.Y.

groups and institutions. It is also a state of mind. The lure of big money is corrupting the nation's criminal-justice system, replacing notions of public service with a drive for higher profits. The eagerness of elected officials to pass "tough-on-crime" legislation—combined with their unwillingness to disclose the true costs of these laws—has encouraged all sorts of financial improprieties. The inner workings of the prison-industrial complex can be observed in the state of New York, where the prison boom started, transforming the economy of an entire region; in Texas and Tennessee, where private

prison companies have thrived; and in California, where the correctional trends of the past two decades have converged and reached extremes. In the realm of psychology a complex is an overreaction to some perceived threat. Eisenhower no doubt had that meaning in mind when, during his farewell address, he urged the nation to resist "a recurring temptation to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current difficulties."

THE LIBERAL LEGACY

THE origins of the prison-industrial complex can be dated to January of 1973. Senator Barry Goldwater had used the fear of crime to attract white middle-class voters a decade earlier, and Richard Nixon had revived the theme during the 1968 presidential campaign, but little that was concrete emerged from their demands for law and order. On the contrary, Congress voted decisively in 1970 to eliminate almost all federal mandatory-minimum sentences for drug offenders. Leading members of both political parties applauded the move. Mainstream opinion considered drug addiction to be largely a public-health problem, not an issue for the criminal courts. The Federal Bureau of Prisons was preparing to close large penitentiaries in Georgia, Kansas, and Washington. From 1963 to 1972 the number of inmates in California had declined by more than a fourth, despite the state's growing population. The number of inmates in New York had fallen to its lowest level since at least 1950. Prisons were widely viewed as a barbaric and ineffective means of controlling deviant behavior. Then, on January 3, 1973, Nelson Rockefeller, the governor of New York, gave a State of the State address demanding that every illegal-drug dealer be punished with a mandatory prison sentence of life without parole.

Rockefeller was a liberal Republican who for a dozen years had governed New York with policies more closely resembling those of Franklin Delano Roosevelt than those of Ronald Reagan. He had been booed at the 1964 Republican Convention by conservative delegates; he still harbored grand political ambitions; and President Nixon would be ineligible for a third term in 1976. Rockefeller demonstrated his newfound commitment to law and order in 1971, when he crushed the Attica prison uprising. By proposing the harshest drug laws in the United States, he took the lead on an issue that would soon dominate the nation's political agenda. In his State of the State address Rockefeller argued not only that all drug dealers should be imprisoned for life but also that plea-bargaining should be forbidden in such cases and that even juvenile offenders should receive life sentences.

The Rockefeller drug laws, enacted a few months later by the state legislature, were somewhat less draconian: the penalty for possessing four ounces of an illegal drug, or for selling two ounces, was a mandatory prison term of fifteen years to life. The legislation also included a provision that established a mandatory prison sentence for many second felony convictions, regardless of the crime or its circumstances. Rockefeller proudly declared that his state had enacted "the toughest anti-drug program in the country." Other states eventually followed New York's example, enacting strict mandatory-minimum sentences for drug offenses. A liberal Democrat, Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill, led the campaign to revive federal mandatory minimums,

which were incorporated in the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act. Nelson Rockefeller had set in motion a profound shift in American sentencing policy, but he never had to deal with the consequences. Nineteen months after the passage of his drug laws Rockefeller became Vice President of the United States.

When Mario Cuomo was first elected governor of New York, in 1982, he confronted some difficult choices. The state government was in a precarious fiscal condition, the inmate population had more than doubled since the passage of the Rockefeller drug laws, and the prison system had grown dangerously overcrowded. A week after Cuomo took office, inmates rioted at Sing Sing, an aging prison in Ossining. Cuomo was an old-fashioned liberal who opposed mandatory-minimum drug sentences. But the national mood seemed to be calling for harsher drug laws, not sympathy for drug addicts. President Reagan had just launched the War on Drugs; it was an inauspicious moment to buck the tide.

Unable to repeal the Rockefeller drug laws, Cuomo decided to build more prisons. The rhetoric of the drug war, however, was proving more popular than the financial reality. In 1981 New York's voters had defeated a \$500 million bond issue for new prison construction. Cuomo searched for an alternate source of financing, and decided to use the state's Urban Development Corporation to build prisons. The corporation was a public agency that had been created in 1968 to build housing for the poor. Despite strong opposition from upstate Republicans, among others, it had been legislated into existence on the day of Martin Luther King Jr.'s funeral, to honor his legacy. The corporation was an attractive means of financing prison construction for one simple reason: it had the authority to issue state bonds without gaining approval from the voters.

Over the next twelve years Mario Cuomo added more prison beds in New York than all the previous governors in the state's history combined. Their total cost, including interest, would eventually reach about \$7 billion. Cuomo's use of the Urban Development Corporation drew criticism from both liberals and conservatives. Robert Gangi, the head of the Correctional Association of New York, argued that Cuomo was building altogether the wrong sort of housing for the poor. The state comptroller, Edward V. Regan, a Republican, said that Cuomo was defying the wishes of the electorate, which had voted not to spend money on prisons, and that his financing scheme was costly and improper. Bonds issued by the Urban Development Corporation carried a higher rate of interest than the state's general-issue bonds.

Legally the state's new prisons were owned by the Urban Development Corporation and leased to the Department of Corrections. In 1991, as New York struggled to emerge from a recession, Governor Cuomo "sold" Attica prison to the corporation for \$200 million and used the money to fill gaps in the state budget. In order to buy the prison, the corporation

had to issue more bonds. The entire transaction could eventually cost New York State about \$700 million.

The New York prison boom was a source of embarrassment for Mario Cuomo. At times he publicly called it “stupid,” an immoral waste of scarce state monies, an obligation forced on him by the dictates of the law. But it was also a source of political capital. Cuomo strongly opposed the death penalty, and building new prisons shielded him from Republican charges of being soft on crime. In his 1987 State of the State address, having just been re-elected by a landslide, Cuomo boasted of having put nearly 10,000 “dangerous felons” behind bars. The inmate population of New York’s prisons had indeed grown by roughly that number during his first term in office. But the proportion of offenders being incarcerated for violent crimes had fallen from 63 percent to 52 percent during those four years. In 1987 New York State sent almost a thousand fewer violent offenders to prison than it had in 1983. Despite having the “toughest anti-drug program” and one of the fastest-growing inmate populations in the nation, New York was hit hard by the crack epidemic of the 1980s and the violent crime that accompanied it. From 1983 to 1990 the state’s inmate population almost doubled—and yet during that same period the violent-crime rate rose 24 percent. Between the passage of the Rockefeller drug laws and the time Cuomo left office, in January of 1995, New York’s inmate population increased almost fivefold. And the state’s prison system was more overcrowded than it had been when the prison boom began.

BY using an unorthodox means of financing prison construction, Mario Cuomo turned the Urban Development Corporation into a rural development corporation that invested billions of dollars in upstate New York. Although roughly 80 percent of the state’s inmates came from New York City and its suburbs, high real-estate prices and opposition from community groups made it difficult to build correctional facilities there. Cuomo needed somewhere to put his new prisons; he formed a close working relationship with the state senator Ronald B. Stafford, a conservative Republican whose rural, Adirondack district included six counties

extending from Lake George to the Canadian border. “Any time there’s an extra prison,” a Cuomo appointee told *Newsday* in 1990, “Ron Stafford will take it.”

Stafford had represented this district, known as the North Country, for more than two decades. Orphaned as a child, he had been adopted by a family in the upstate town of Danemora. The main street of the town was dominated by the massive stone wall around Clinton, a notorious maximum-security prison. His adoptive father was a correctional officer at Clinton, and Stafford spent much of his childhood within the prison’s walls. He developed great respect for correctional officers, and viewed their profession as an honorable one; he believed that prisons could give his district a real economic boost. Towns in the North Country soon competed with one another to attract new prisons. The Republican Party controlled the state senate, and prison construction became part of the political give and take with the Cuomo administration. Of the twenty-nine correctional facilities authorized during the Cuomo years, twenty-eight were built in upstate districts represented by Republican senators.

When most people think of New York, they picture Manhattan. In fact, two thirds of the state’s counties are classified as rural. Perhaps no other region in the United States has so wide a gulf between its urban and rural populations. People in the North Country—which includes the

Adirondack State Park, one of the nation’s largest wilderness areas—tend to be politically conservative, taciturn, fond of the outdoors, and white. New York City and the North Country have very little in common. One thing they do share, however, is a high rate of poverty.

Twenty-five years ago the North Country had two prisons; now it has eighteen correctional facilities, and a nineteenth is under construction. They run the gamut from maximum-security prisons to drug-treatment centers and boot camps. One of the first new facilities to open was Ray Brook, a federal prison that occupies the former Olympic Village at Lake Placid. Other prisons have opened in abandoned factories and sanatoriums. For the most part North Country prisons are tucked away, hidden by trees, nearly invisible amid the vastness and beauty of the Adirondacks. But they have brought

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profound change. Roughly one out of every twenty people in the North Country is a prisoner. The town of Dannemora now has more inmates than inhabitants.

The traditional anchors of the North Country economy—mining, logging, dairy farms, and manufacturing—have been in decline for years. Tourism flourishes in most towns during the summer months. According to Ram Chugh, the director of the Rural Services Institute at the State University of New York at Potsdam, the North Country's per capita income has long been about 40 percent lower than the state's average per capita income. The prison boom has provided a huge infusion of state money to an economically depressed region—one of the largest direct investments the state has ever made there. In addition to the more than \$1.5 billion spent to build correctional facilities, the prisons now bring the North Country about \$425 million in annual payroll and operating expenditures. That represents an annual subsidy to the region of more than \$1,000 per person. The economic impact of the prisons extends beyond the wages they pay and the local services they buy. Prisons are labor-intensive institutions, offering year-round employment. They are recession-proof, usually expanding in size during hard times. And they are nonpolluting—an important consideration in rural areas where other forms of development are often blocked by environmentalists. Prisons have brought a stable, steady income to a region long accustomed to a highly seasonal, uncertain economy.

Anne Mackinnon, who grew up in the North Country and wrote about its recent emergence as New York's "Siberia" for *Adirondack Life* magazine, says the prison boom has had an enormous effect on the local culture. Just about everyone now seems to have at least one relative who works in corrections. Prison jobs have slowed the exodus from small towns, by allowing young people to remain in the area. The average salary of a correctional officer in New York State is about \$36,000—more than 50 percent higher than the typical salary in the North Country. The job brings health benefits and a pension. Working as a correctional officer is one of the few ways that men and women without college degrees can enjoy a solid middle-class life there. Although prison jobs are stressful and dangerous, they are viewed as a means of preserving local communities. So many North Country residents have become correctional officers over the past decade that those just starting out must work for years in prisons downstate, patiently waiting for a job opening at one of the facilities in the Adirondacks.

WHILE many families in the north await the return of sons and daughters slowly earning seniority downstate, families in New York City must endure the absence of loved ones who seem to have been not just imprisoned for their crimes but exiled as well. Every Friday night about 800 people, mostly women and children, almost all of them African-American or Latino, gather at Columbus Circle, in Manhat-

tan, and board buses for the north. The buses leave through the night and arrive in time for visiting hours on Saturday. Operation Prison Gap, which runs the service, was founded by an ex-convict named Ray Simmons who had been imprisoned upstate and knew how hard it was for the families of inmates to arrange visits. When the company started, in 1973, it carried passengers in a single van. Now it charters thirty-five buses and vans on a typical weekend and a larger number on special occasions, such as Father's Day and Thanksgiving. Ray Simmons's brother Tyrone, who heads the company, says that despite the rising inmate population, ridership has fallen a bit over the past few years. The inconvenience and expense of the long bus trips take their toll. One customer, however, has for fifteen years faithfully visited her son in Comstock every weekend. In 1996 she stopped appearing at Columbus Circle; her son had been released. Six months later he was convicted of another violent crime and sent back to the same prison. The woman, now in her seventies, still boards the 2:00 A.M. bus for Comstock every weekend. Simmons gives her a discount, charging her \$15—the same price she paid on her first trip, in 1983.

The Bare Hill Correctional Facility sits near the town of Malone, fifteen miles south of the Canadian border. The Franklin Correctional Facility is a quarter of a mile down the road, and the future site of a new maximum-security prison is next door. Bare Hill is one of the "cookie cutter" medium-security prisons that were built during the Cuomo administration. The state has built fourteen other prisons exactly like it—a form of penal mass production that saves a good deal of money. Most of the inmates at Bare Hill are housed in dormitories, not cells. The dormitories were designed to hold about fifty inmates, each with his own small cubicle and bunk. In 1990, two years after the prison opened, double-bunking was introduced as a "temporary" measure to ease the overcrowding in county jails, which were holding an overflow of state inmates. Eight years later every dormitory at Bare Hill houses sixty inmates, a third of them double-bunked. About 90 percent of the inmates come from New York City or one of its suburbs, eight hours away; about 80 percent are African-American or Latino. The low walls of the cubicles, which allow little privacy, are covered with family photographs, pinups, religious postcards. Twenty-four hours a day a correctional officer sits alone at a desk on a platform that overlooks the dorm.

The superintendent of Bare Hill, Peter J. Lacy, is genial and gray-haired, tall and dignified in his striped tie, flannels, and blue blazer. His office feels light and cheery. Lacy began his career, in 1955, as a correctional officer at Dannemora; he wore a uniform for twenty-five years, and in the 1980s headed a special unit that handled prison emergencies and riots. He later served as an assistant commissioner of the New York Department of Corrections. One of his sons is now a lieutenant at a downstate prison. As Superintendent Lacy

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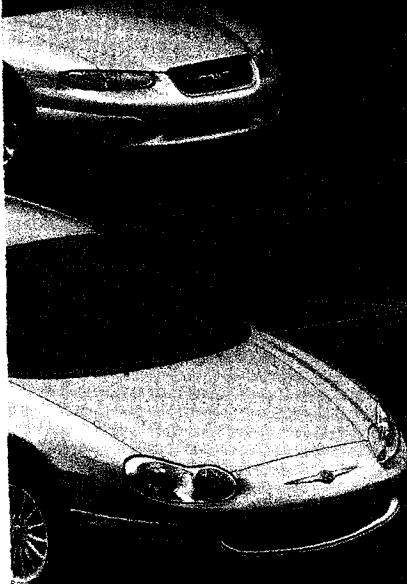
The Chrysler (Cirrus/Concorde) was the highest ranked (entry/premium) midsize car in J.D. Power and Associates 1998 Initial Quality Study 2SM Study based on total of 58,113,191 Oct.-Nov. new vehicle buyers of 200+ models after the first 90 days of ownership. Sebring tied in the convertibles under \$30,000 class. Limited model shown.

Ditto.

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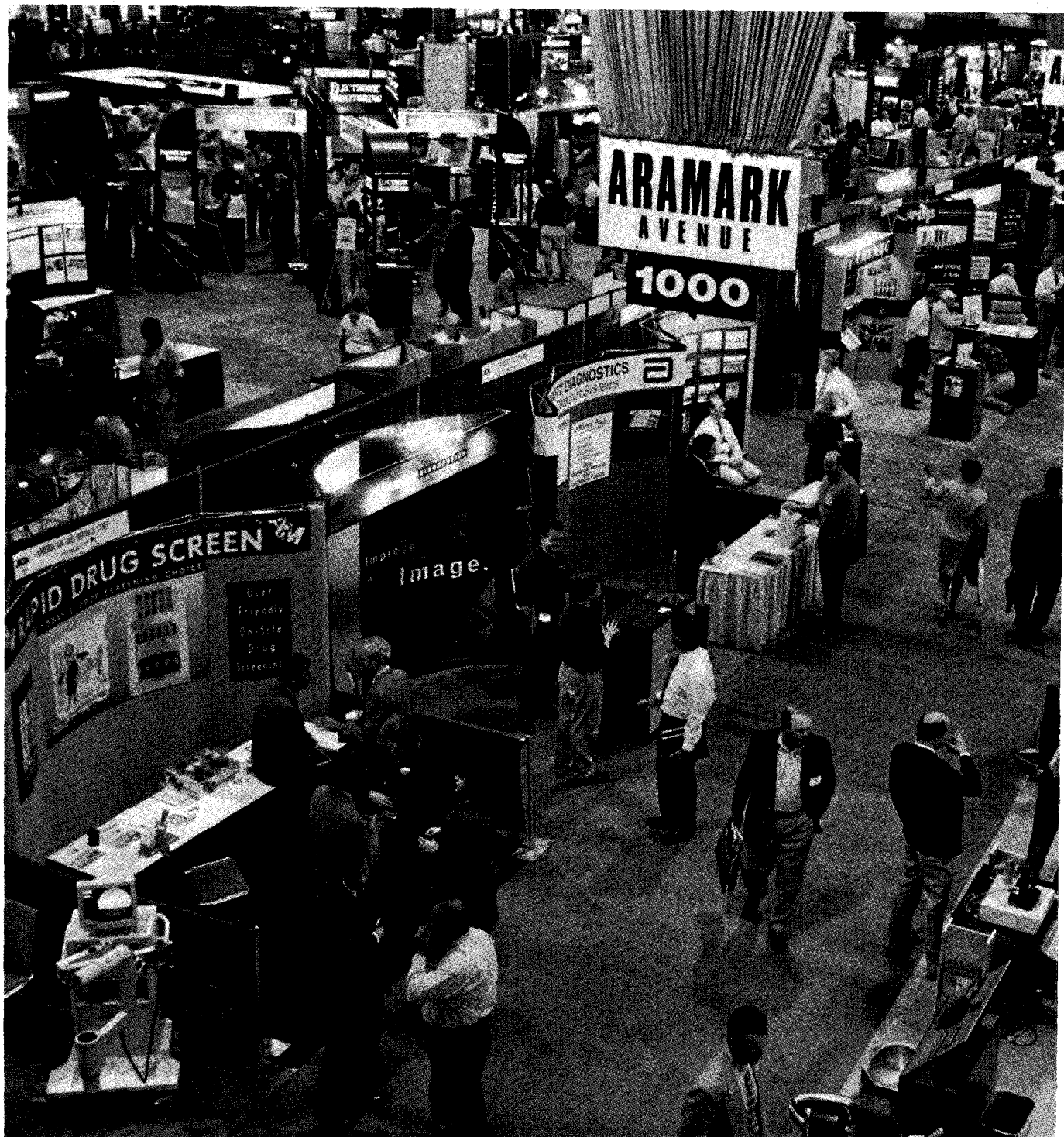
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consumer responses indicating owner-reported problems during the first 90 days of ownership. www.jdpower.com. Strategic Vision's 1998 Vehicle Experience Study™ surveyed



American Corrections Association convention, 1997

walks through the prison grounds, he seems like a captain surveying his ship, rightly proud of its upkeep, familiar with every detail. The lawns are neatly trimmed, the buildings are well maintained, and the red-brick dorms would not seem out of place on a college campus, except for the bars in the windows. There is nothing oppressive about the physical appearance of Bare Hill, about the ball fields with pine trees in the background, about the brightly colored murals and rustic sten-

cils on the walls, about the classrooms where instructors teach inmates how to read, how to write, how to draw a blueprint, how to lay bricks, how to obtain a Social Security card, how to deal with their anger. For many inmates Bare Hill is the neatest, cleanest, most well-ordered place they will ever live. As Lacy passes a group of inmates leaving their dorms for class, the inmates nod their heads in acknowledgment, and a few of them say, "Hello, sir." And every so often a young inmate gives Lacy a look filled with a hatred so pure and so palpable that it would burn Bare Hill to the ground, if only it could.



BIG BUSINESS

THE black-and-white photograph shows an inmate leaning out of a prison cell, scowling at the camera, his face partially hidden in the shadows. "HOW HE GOT IN IS YOUR BUSINESS," the ad copy begins. "HOW HE GETS OUT IS OURS." The photo is on the cover of a glossy brochure promoting AT&T's prison telephone service, which is called The Authority. BellSouth has a similar service, called MAX, advertised with a photo of a heavy steel chain dangling

from a telephone receiver in place of a cord. The ad promises "long distance service that lets inmates go only so far." Although the phone companies rely on clever copy in their ads, providing telephone service to prisons and jails has become a serious, highly profitable business. The nearly two million inmates in the United States are ideal customers: phone calls are one of their few links to the outside world; most of their calls must be made collect; and they are in no position to switch long-distance carriers. A pay phone at a prison can generate as much as \$15,000 a year—about five times the revenue of a typical pay phone on the street. It is estimated that inmate calls generate a billion dollars or more in revenues each year. The business has become so lucrative that MCI installed its inmate phone service, Maximum Security, throughout the California prison system at no charge. As part of the deal it also offered the California Department of Corrections a 32 percent share of all the revenues from inmates' phone calls. MCI Maximum Security adds a \$3.00 surcharge to every call. When free enterprise intersects with a captive market, abuses are bound to occur. MCI Maximum Security and North American Intelcom have both been caught overcharging for calls made by inmates; in one state MCI was adding an additional minute to every call.

Since 1980 spending on corrections at the local, state, and federal levels has increased about fivefold. What was once a niche business for a handful of companies has become a multibillion-dollar industry with its own trade shows and conventions, its own Web sites, mail-order catalogues, and direct-marketing campaigns. The prison-industrial complex now includes some of the nation's largest architecture and construction firms, Wall Street investment banks that handle prison bond issues and invest in private prisons, plumbing-supply companies, food-service companies, health-care companies, companies that sell everything from bullet-resistant security cameras to padded cells available in a "vast color selection." A directory called the Corrections Yellow Pages lists more than a thousand vendors. Among the items now being advertised for sale: a "violent prisoner chair," a sadomasochist's fantasy of belts and shackles attached to a metal frame, with special accessories for juveniles; B.O.S.S., a "body-orifice security scanner," essentially a metal detector that an inmate must sit on; and a diverse line of razor wire, with trade names such as Maze, Supermaze, Detainer Hook Barb, and Silent Swordsman Barbed Tape.

As the prison industry has grown, it has assumed many of the attributes long associated with the defense industry. The line between the public interest and private interests has blurred. In much the same way that retired admirals and generals have long found employment with defense contractors, correctional officials are now leaving the public sector for jobs with firms that supply the prison industry. These career opportunities did not exist a generation ago. Fundamental choices about public safety, employee training, and the de-

nial of personal freedoms are increasingly being made with an eye to the bottom line.

One clear sign that corrections has become a big business as well as a form of government service is the emergence of a trade newspaper devoted to the latest trends in the prison and jail marketplace. *Correctional Building News* has become the *Variety* of the prison world, widely read by correctional officials, investors, and companies with something to sell. Eli Gage, its publisher, founded the paper in 1994, after searching for a high-growth industry not yet served by its own trade journal. Gage is neither a cheerleader for the industry nor an outspoken critic. He believes that despite recent declines in violent crime, national spending on corrections will continue to grow at an annual rate of five to 10 percent. The number of young people in the prime demographic for committing crimes, ages fifteen to twenty-four, is about to increase; and the demand for new juvenile-detention centers is already rising. *Correctional Building News* runs ads by the leading companies that build prisons (Turner Construction, CRSS, Brown & Root) and the leading firms that design them (DMJM, the DLR Group, and KMD Architects). It features a product of the month, a facility of the month, and a section titled "People in the News." An advertisement in a recent issue promoted electrified fences with the line "Don't Touch!"

PPRIVATE-prison companies are the most obvious, the most controversial, and the fastest-growing segment of the prison-industrial complex. The idea of private prisons was greeted with enthusiasm during the Reagan and Bush Administrations; it fit perfectly with a belief in small government and the privatization of public services. The Clinton Administration, however, has done far more than its Republican predecessors to legitimize private prisons. It has encouraged the Justice Department to place illegal aliens and minimum-security inmates in private correctional facilities, as part of a drive to reduce the federal work force. The rationale for private prisons is that government monopolies such as old-fashioned departments of corrections are inherently wasteful and inefficient, and the private sector, through competition for contracts, can provide much

better service at a much lower cost. The privatization of prisons is often described as a "win-win" outcome. A private-prison company generally operates a facility for a government agency, or builds and operates its own facility. The nation's private prisons accepted their first inmates in the mid-1980s. Today at least twenty-seven states make use of private prisons, and approximately 90,000 inmates are being held in prisons run for profit.

The living conditions in many of the nation's private prisons are unquestionably superior to conditions in many state-run facilities. At least forty-five state prison systems are now operating at or above their intended capacity. In twenty-two states prisons are operating under court-ordered population caps. In fifteen states prison conditions are being monitored by the courts. Life in the aging, overcrowded prisons operat-

ed by many state agencies is dangerous and degrading. Most of the 34,000 state inmates currently being held in the nation's jails for lack of available prison cells live in conditions that are even worse. Private prisons tend to be brand-new, rarely overcrowded, and less likely to house violent offenders. Moreover, some private prisons offer programs, such as drug treatment and vocational training, that a number of state systems have cut back. And yet something inherent in the idea of private prisons seems to invite abuse.

The economics of the private-prison industry are in many respects similar to those of the lodging industry. An inmate at a private prison is like a guest at a hotel—a guest whose bill is being paid and whose check-out date is set by someone else. A hotel has a strong economic incentive to book every available room and encourage every guest to stay as long as possible. A private

prison has exactly the same incentive. The labor costs constitute the bulk of operating costs for both kinds of accommodation. The higher the occupancy rate, the higher the profit margin. Although it might seem unlikely that a private prison would ever try to keep an inmate longer than was necessary for justice to be served, New York State's experience with the "fee system" during the nineteenth century suggests that the temptation to do so is hard to resist. Under the fee system local sheriffs charged inmates for their stay in jail. A 1902 report by the Correctional Association of New York

THE CORRECTIONS
CORPORATION OF
AMERICA ANNOUNCED
IT WOULD BUILD THREE
PRISONS IN CALIFORNIA
ENTIRELY ON SPEC—
THAT IS, WITHOUT ANY
CONTRACT TO FILL THEM.
"IF YOU BUILD IT IN
THE RIGHT PLACE," A CCA
EXECUTIVE SAID, "THE
PRISONERS WILL COME."

harshly criticized this system, warning that judges might be inclined to "sentence a man to jail where he may be a source of revenue to a friendly sheriff." Whenever the fee system was abolished in a New York county, the inmate population dropped—by as much as half. Last year a Prudential Securities report on private prisons described some of the potential risks for the industry: a falling crime rate, shorter prison sentences, a move toward alternative sentences, and changes in the nation's drug laws. Nonetheless, the report concluded that "the industry appears to have excellent prospects."

Private-prison companies can often build prisons faster and at lower cost than state agencies, owing to fewer bureaucratic delays and less red tape. And new prisons tend to be much less expensive to operate than the old prisons still used in many states. But most of the savings that private-prison companies offer are derived from the use of nonunion workers. Labor represents 60 to 80 percent of the operating costs at a prison. Although private-prison companies are now moving into northern states and even signing agreements with some labor unions, the overwhelming majority of private-prison cells are in southern and southwestern states hostile to unions. Correctional officers in these private prisons usually earn lower wages than officers employed by state governments, while receiving fewer benefits and no pension. Some private-prison companies offer their uniformed staff stock options as a retirement plan; the long-term value of the stock is uncertain. The sort of cost-cutting imposed on correctional officers does not extend to managers and administrators. They usually earn much more than their counterparts in the public sector—a fact that greatly increases the potential for conflicts of interest and official corruption.

BED BROKERS AND MAN-DAYS

LAST year a videotape of beatings at a private correctional facility in Texas provoked a great deal of controversy. The tape showed correctional officers at the Brazoria County Detention Center kicking inmates who were lying on the floor, shooting inmates with a stun gun, and ordering a police dog to attack them. The inmates had been convicted of crimes in Missouri, but were occupying rented cells in rural Texas. One of the correctional officers in the video had previously lost his job at a Texas state prison and served time on federal charges for beating an inmate. The Brazoria County videotape received nationwide publicity and prompted Missouri to cancel its contract with Capital Correctional Resources, the private company operating the facility. But the beatings were unusual only because they were captured on tape. Incidents far more violent and surreal have become almost commonplace in the private prisons of Texas.

The private-prison system in Texas arose in response to the violence and disarray of the state system. In 1980 conditions in Texas state prisons were so bad that the federal judge

William Wayne Justice ruled that they amounted to "cruel and unusual punishment." He appointed a special overseer for the prison system and ordered the state to provide at least forty square feet of living space for each inmate. By the mid-1980s, however, conditions had grown even worse: Texas prisons were more overcrowded; gang wars between inmates resulted in dozens of murders; and local jails were so crammed with the overflow of state inmates that a number of counties later sued the state for relief. In 1986 Judge Justice threatened the state with a fine of \$800,000 a day unless it came up with a plan to ease the overcrowding in its prisons. While the Texas legislature scrambled to add new prison beds to the system, entrepreneurs sensed that profits could be made from housing state inmates in private facilities. Developers cut deals with sheriffs in impoverished rural counties, providing the capital to build brand-new jails, offering to run them, and promising to share the profits. Privately run correctional facilities sprang up throughout rural Texas, much the way oil rigs were once raised by wildcatters. The founders of one large private-prison developer, N-Group Securities, had previously sold condominiums and run a Houston disco. One critic quoted by the *Houston Chronicle* called the speculative new enterprises "Joe's Bar and Grill and Prisons."

The private-prison building spree in Texas—backed by investors such as Allstate, Merrill Lynch, Shearson Lehman, and American Express—soon faced an unanticipated problem. The State of Texas, under the auspices of a liberal Democratic governor, Ann Richards, began to carry out an ambitious prison-construction plan of its own in 1991, employing inmate labor and adding almost 100,000 new beds in just a few years. In effect the state flooded the market. Private firms turned to "bed brokers" for help, hoping to recruit prisoners from out of state. By the mid-1990s thousands of inmates from across the United States were being transported from overcrowded prison systems to "rent-a-cell" facilities in small Texas towns. The distances involved in this huge migration at times made it reminiscent of the eighteenth-century transport schemes that shipped British convicts and debtors to Australia. In 1996 the Newton County Correctional Center, in Newton, Texas, operated by a company called the Bobby Ross Group, became the State of Hawaii's third largest prison.

The private-prison industry usually charges its customers a daily rate for each inmate; the success or failure of a private prison is determined by the number of "man-days" it can generate. In a typical rent-a-cell arrangement a state with a surplus of inmates will contact a well-established bed broker, such as Dominion Management, of Edmond, Oklahoma. The broker will search for a facility with empty beds at the right price. The cost per man-day can range from \$25 to \$60, depending on the kind of facility and its level of occupancy. The more crowded a private prison becomes, the less it charges for each additional inmate. Facilities with individual cells are

more expensive than those with dormitories. Bed brokers earn a commission of \$2.50 to \$5.50 per man-day, depending on how tight the market for prison cells is at the time. The county—which does not operate the prison but simply gives it legal status—sometimes gets a fee of as much as \$1.50 a night for each prisoner. When every bed is filled, the private-prison company, the bed broker, and the county can do quite well.

The interstate commerce in prisoners, like many new industries, developed without much government regulation. In 1996 the State of Texas encountered a number of unexpected legal problems. Its private prisons were housing roughly 5,000 inmates from fourteen states. In August of that year two Oregon sex offenders escaped from a Houston facility operated by the Corrections Corporation of America. The facility normally held illegal aliens, under contract to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Faced with empty beds, CCA had imported 240 sex offenders from Oregon. Texas officials had no idea that violent offenders from another state were being housed in this minimum-security facility. The escaped prisoners were eventually recaptured—but they could not be prosecuted for escaping, because running away from a private prison was not a violation of any Texas state law. The following month a riot erupted at the Frio Detention Center, a private facility operated by the Dove Development Corporation, which housed about 300 inmates from Utah and Missouri. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice had to send thirty of its officers in riot gear to regain control of the prison. A month later two Utah prisoners, one of them a convicted murderer, escaped from the same facility. A manhunt by state authorities failed to recapture them. Six other Utah inmates had previously escaped from facilities run by Dove Development; three were murderers. Last year the Texas legislature passed a bill that made it illegal for an offender from any state to escape from a private prison and that held the owners of such facilities responsible for any public expense stemming from riots or escapes. Few other states have even attempted to pass legislation dealing with these issues.

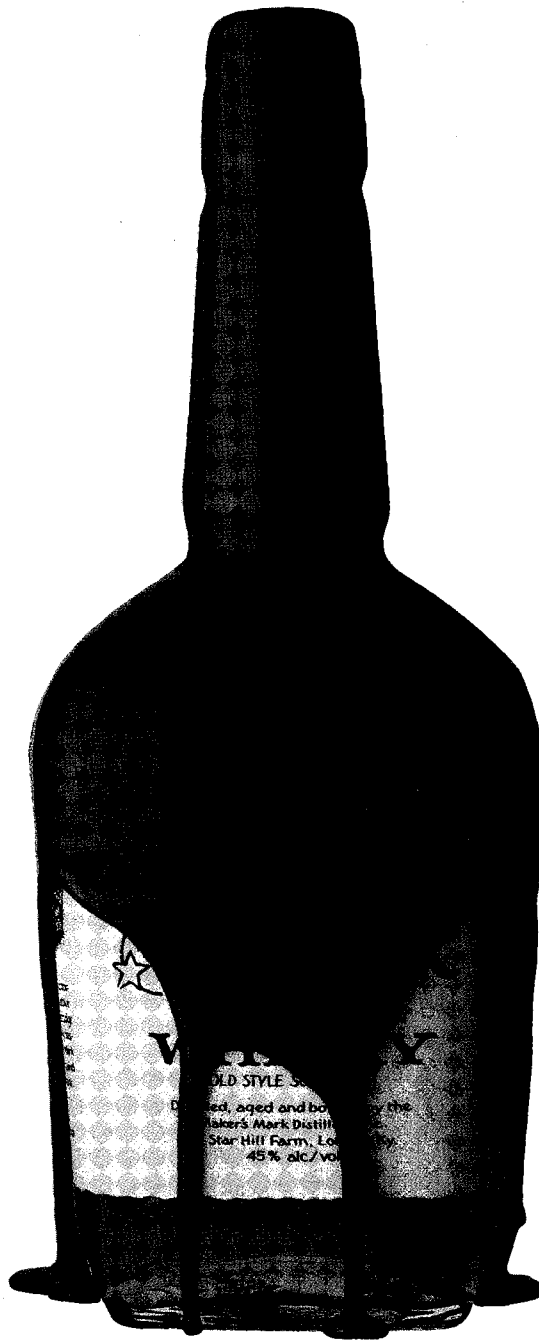
The private companies that now transport thousands of inmates across the United States every day face even less government oversight than private-prison companies. Indeed, federal regulations concerning the interstate shipment of cattle are much stricter than those concerning the interstate shipment of prisoners. Sheriff's deputies and U.S. marshals have traditionally been used to pick up inmates in one state and deliver them to another. During the late 1980s private companies began to offer the same service for about half the cost. The firms saved money by employing nonunion guards and making multiple pickups and deliveries on each trip. Prisoners today may spend as long as a month on the road, visiting dozens of states, sitting for days in the backs of old station wagons and vans, locked up alongside defendants

awaiting trial and offenders on their way to prison. Driving one of these transport vehicles is a dangerous job, one that combines the stresses encountered by correctional officers with those of long-distance truckers. Moreover, prisoners tend to view their days in transit as an excellent time to attempt an escape. The turnover rate among the transport guards and drivers is high; the pay is relatively low; and training for the job rarely lasts more than a week. As a result, violent criminals are frequently shipped from state to state in the custody of people who are ill equipped to deal with them. Local authorities often don't learn that inmates are passing through their towns until something goes wrong.

In August of 1996 Rick Carter and Sue Smith, the husband-and-wife operators of R and S Prisoner Transport, were taking five murderers and a rapist from Iowa to New Mexico. At a public rest stop in the Texas Panhandle one of the convicts assaulted Carter on the way to the men's room. The others overpowered his wife and seized the van. Carter and Smith, who had set off unarmed, were taken hostage. A passing motorist dialed 911, and the six inmates were recaptured by Texas police officers after a chase. On July 30 of last year Dennis Patrick Glick—a convicted rapist, sentenced to two life terms, who was being transported from Utah to Arkansas—commandeered a van owned by the Federal Extradition Agency, a private company. One of the guards had fallen asleep, and Glick borrowed his gun. Glick took the guard and seven other inmates hostage in Ordway, Colorado; abandoned the van; took a local rancher hostage; stole two more vehicles and a horse; eluded sixty law-enforcement officers through the night; and was captured the next morning on horseback. In December of last year Homer D. Land, a prisoner being transported from Kansas to Florida, escaped from a van operated by TransCor America. The van had stopped at a Burger King in Owatonna, Minnesota. While one guard went inside and bought eleven hamburgers, the other guard (who had been a TransCor America employee for less than a month) opened the van's back doors for ventilation, enabling Land and two other inmates to get away. Land took a married couple hostage and spent the night at their house in Owatonna before being recaptured in Chicago. The same TransCor America van had been commandeered four days earlier by Whatley Roylene, a prisoner traveling from New Mexico to Massachusetts and facing charges of murder and armed robbery. At a gas station in Sterling, Colorado, Roylene grabbed a shotgun from a sleeping guard. Officers from the Colorado state police and the local sheriff's department surrounded the van; the standoff ended, according to a local official, when other prisoners persuaded Roylene to hand over the gun.

THE Bobby Ross Group, based in Austin, Texas, has proved to be one of the more troubled private-prison companies. The company's founder, Bobby Ross, was a sheriff in Texas and a successful bed broker before starting his

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own business, in 1993. He eventually set up operations at seven Texas facilities and one Georgia facility, signing contracts to accept inmates from states including Colorado, Hawaii, Montana, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Virginia. It did not take long for problems to begin. In January of 1996 nearly 500 Colorado inmates, many of them sex offenders, were transferred to a Bobby Ross facility in Karnes County, Texas; two later escaped, and a full day passed before state authorities were notified. At the Bobby Ross prison in Dickens County, Texas, fights broke out between inmates from Montana and Hawaii that spring. A few months later a protest about the poor quality of food and medical care turned into a riot, and the warden ordered guards to shoot live rounds. The warden was replaced.

Montana canceled its contract with the Bobby Ross Group in September of last year. Three Montana inmates had escaped, and one had been killed by an inmate from Hawaii. Montana investigators found that many of the inmates at the Dickens County prison were going hungry and waiting days to see a doctor. "We really dislike losing a customer," an attorney representing Bobby Ross said to a reporter. In October an inspector for the Texas Commission on Jail Standards gave the Dickens County prison the highest possible ratings. A month later the same inspector acknowledged that in addition to his official duties he worked as a "consultant" for the Bobby Ross Group, which paid him \$42,000 a year. In December eleven inmates from Hawaii escaped from their dormitory at the Newton County facility operated by Bobby Ross, released nearly 300 other inmates, and set fire to one of the buildings. In February of this year inmates rioted again at Newton and set fire to the prison commissary. In brighter days, before the riots and fires, Bobby Ross had explained the usefulness of employing William Sessions, the former director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, as a "special adviser" to the company. "He goes with us on sales calls to potential clients," Ross told a reporter for the Colorado paper *Westword*. "That kind of thing."

The U.S. Corrections Corporation, for years the nation's third largest private-prison company, has encountered legal difficulties even more serious than those of the Bobby Ross Group. In 1993 an investigation by the Louisville *Courier-Journal* discovered that the company was using unpaid prison labor in Kentucky. Inmates were being forced to perform a variety of jobs, including construction work on nine small buildings at the Lee County prison; construction work on one church and renovation work on three others attended by company employees; renovation work on a company employee's game-room business; painting and maintenance at a country club; and painting at a private school attended by a prison warden's daughter. The *Courier-Journal* concluded that "U.S. Corrections has repeatedly profited financially from its misuse of inmate labor." Although the state Department of Corrections confirmed these findings, it took no



action against the company. A year later J. Clifford Todd, the chairman of U.S. Corrections, pleaded guilty to a federal charge of mail fraud, admitting that he had paid a total of roughly \$200,000 to a county correctional official in Kentucky. In return for monthly payments, which for four years were laundered through a California company, the official sent inmates to U.S. Corrections. Todd cooperated fully with an FBI investigation, but later became embittered when a federal judge denied his request for a term of house arrest. The head of the nation's third largest private-prison



company was sentenced to fifteen months in a federal prison.

The nation's second largest private-prison company, Wackenhut Corrections, has operated with a far greater degree of professionalism and discretion. Its parent company, the Wackenhut Corporation, has for many years worked closely with the federal government, performing various sensitive tasks such as guarding nuclear-weapons facilities and overseas embassies. Indeed, the company has long been accused of operating as a front for the Central Intelligence Agency—an accusation that its founder, George Wackenhut,

Shift change, Clinton prison, Dannemora, N.Y.

has vehemently denied. In the early 1950s Wackenhut quit the FBI, at the age of thirty-four, and formed a private-security company with three other former FBI agents. He went on to assemble the nation's largest private collection of files on alleged "subversives," with dossiers on at least three million Americans. During the 1970s the Wackenhut Corporation diversified into strike-breaking and anti-terrorism. The company, headquartered in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, has

branch offices in forty-two states and in more than fifty foreign countries. Its annual revenues exceed \$1 billion. George Wackenhut remains the chairman of the company, but the day-to-day operations are handled by his son, Richard. Over the years Wackenhut's board of directors has read like a Who's Who of national security, including a former head of the FBI, a former head of the Defense Intelligence Agency, a former CIA director, a former CIA deputy director, a former head of the Secret Service, a former head of the Marine Corps, and a former Attorney General. After the company decided to enter the private-prison industry, it hired Norman Carlson, who had headed the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

Last year Wackenhut Corrections became the first private company ever hired by the Federal Bureau of Prisons to manage a large facility. The federal government's long-standing relationship with Wackenhut has developed an odd equilibrium: one wields the power while the other reaps the financial rewards. Kathleen Hawk Sawyer, the current director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, is responsible for the supervision of about 115,000 inmates, including drug lords, international terrorists, and organized-crime leaders. Her salary last year was \$125,900. George C. Zoley, the chief executive officer of Wackenhut Corrections, is responsible for the supervision of about 25,000 state and federal inmates, mostly illegal aliens, low-level drug offenders, petty thieves, and parole violators. His salary last year was \$366,000—plus a bonus of \$122,500, plus a stock-option grant of 20,000 shares. At least half a dozen other executives at Wackenhut Corrections were paid more last year than the head of the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

The Corrections Corporation of America is the nation's largest private-prison company; it recently participated in a buyout of the U.S. Corrections Corporation, thereby obtaining several thousand additional inmates. CCA was founded in 1983 by Thomas W. Beasley and Doctor R. Crants, Nashville businessmen with little previous experience in corrections. Beasley, a former chairman of the Tennessee Republican Party, later told *Inc.* magazine his strategy for promoting the concept of private prisons: "You just sell it like you were selling cars, or real estate, or hamburgers." Beasley and Crants recruited a former director of the Virginia Department of Corrections to help run the company. In 1984 CCA accepted its first Texas inmates, before it had a completed facility in that state. The inmates were housed in rented motel rooms; a number of them pushed the air-conditioning units out of the wall and escaped. A year later Beasley approached his good friend Lamar Alexander, the governor of Tennessee, with an extraordinary proposal: CCA would buy the state's entire prison system for \$250 million. Alexander supported the idea, saying, "We don't need to be afraid in America of people who want to make a profit." His wife, Honey, and the speaker of the Tennessee House, Ned McWherter, were among CCA's early investors; between them the two had

owned 1.5 percent of CCA's stock; they sold their shares to avoid any perceived conflict of interest. Nevertheless, the CCA plan was blocked by the Democratic majority in the legislature.

CCA expanded nationwide over the next decade, winning contracts to house more than 40,000 inmates and assembling the sixth largest prison system in the United States; but it never lost the desire to take over all the prisons in Tennessee. In order to achieve that goal, CCA executives established personal and financial links with figures in both political parties. During the spring of last year CCA's allies in the Tennessee legislature began once again to push for privatization. Crants said that letting CCA run the prisons would save the state up to \$100 million a year; he did not specify how these dramatic savings would be achieved. George Zoley, the head of Wackenhut Corrections, argued that handing over the Tennessee prison system to a single company would simply turn a state monopoly into a private one. Wackenhut employed the law firm of the former U.S. senator Howard Baker to lobby on its behalf, seeking a piece of the action.

By February of this year a compromise of sorts had emerged in Tennessee. New legislation proposed shifting as much as 70 percent of the state's inmate population to the private sector; CCA and Wackenhut would both get a chance to bid for prison contracts. The new privatization bill seemed a sure thing. It was never put before the legislature for a vote, however. On April 20 CCA announced plans for a corporate restructuring so complex in its details that many Wall Street analysts began to wonder about the company's financial health. The price of CCA stock—which in recent years had been one of the nation's top performers—began to plummet, declining in value by 25 percent over the next several days. At the annual CCA shareholders meeting, last May, Crants compared Wall Street investors to "wildebeests" stampeding out of fear, and blamed the stock's plunge on a single broker who had sold 640,000 shares.

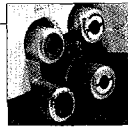
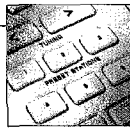
Crants neglected to tell CCA shareholders a crucial bit of information: he himself had sold 200,000 shares of CCA stock just weeks before the announcement that sent its value tumbling. By selling his stock on March 2, Crants had avoided a loss of more than \$2.5 million. When asked recently to explain his CCA financial dealings, Crants declined to comment. The timing and the size of that stock transaction are likely to be of interest to the attorneys who have filed more than half a dozen lawsuits on behalf of CCA shareholders.

Although conservatives have long worried about the loss of American sovereignty to international agencies such as the United Nations and the World Bank, the globalization of private-prison companies has thus far eluded criticism. A British private-prison company, Securicor, operates two facilities in Florida. Wackenhut Corrections is now under contract to operate Doncaster prison, in England; three prisons in Australia; and a prison in Scotland. It is actively seeking

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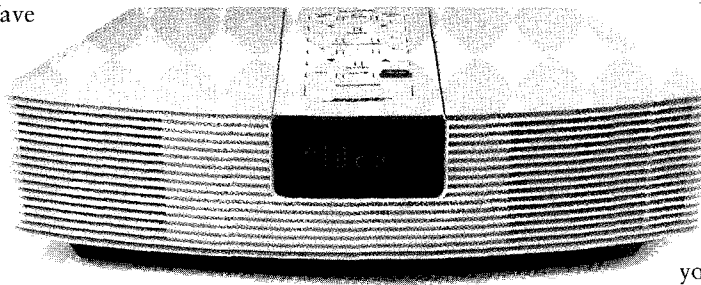
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Bose presents the Wave radio. It's the one radio acclaimed by leading audio critics. Because it's the one radio that delivers big, rich, lifelike stereo sound *plus* a small, convenient size.



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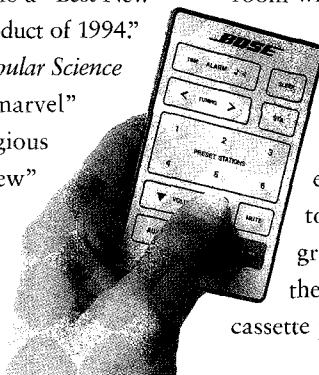


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prison contracts in South Africa. CCA has received a good deal of publicity lately, but few of the articles about it have mentioned that the largest shareholder of America's largest private-prison company is Sodexho Alliance—a food-service conglomerate whose corporate headquarters are in Paris.

THE MEGA-PRISON

ABOUT 200 inmates were in the A yard at New Folsom when I visited not long ago. They were playing softball and handball, sitting on rocks, standing in small groups, smoking, laughing, jogging around the perimeter. Three unarmed correctional officers casually kept an eye on things, like elementary school teachers during recess. The yard was about 300 feet long and 250 feet wide, with more dirt than grass, and it was hot, baking hot. The heat of the sun bounced off the gray concrete walls enclosing the yard. "These are the sensitive guys," a correctional officer told me, describing the men in Facility A. Most of them had killed, raped, committed armed robberies, or misbehaved at other prisons, but now they were trying to stay out of trouble. Some were former gang members; some were lifers because of a third strike; some were getting too old for prison violence; some were in protective custody because of their celebrity, their snitching, or their previous occupation. A few of the inmates on the yard were former police officers. As word spread that I was a journalist, groups of inmates followed me and politely approached, eager to talk. Lieutenant Billy Mayfield, New Folsom's press officer, graciously kept his distance, allowing the prisoners to speak freely.

"I shouldn't be here" was a phrase I heard often, followed by an impassioned story about the unfairness of the system. I asked each inmate how many of the other men in the yard deserved to be locked up in this prison, and the usual response was "These guys? Man, you wouldn't believe some of these guys; at least two thirds of them should be here." Behind the need to blame others for their predicament and the refusal to accept responsibility, behind all the denial, lay an enormous anger, one that seemed far more intense than the typical inmate complaints about the food or the behavior of certain officers. Shirtless, sweating, unshaven, covered in tattoos, one inmate after another described the rage that was growing inside New Folsom. The weights had been taken away; no more conjugal visits for inmates who lacked a parole date; not enough help for the inmates who were crazy, really crazy; not enough drug treatment, when the place was full of junkies; not enough to do—a list of grievances magnified by the overcrowding into something that felt volatile, ready to go off with the slightest spark. As I stood in the yard hearing the anger of the sensitive guys, the inmates in Facility C were locked in their cells, because of a gang-related stabbing the previous week, and the inmates in Facility B were being shot with pepper spray to break up a fight.

The acting warden at New Folsom when I visited, a woman named Suzan Hubbard, began her career as a correctional officer at San Quentin nineteen years ago. Although she has a degree in social work from the University of California at Berkeley, Hubbard says that her real education took place at the "college of San Quentin." She spent a decade at the prison during one of its most violent and turbulent periods. In her years on the job two fellow staff members were murdered. Hubbard learned how to develop a firm but fair relationship with inmates, some of whom were on death row. She found that contrary to some expectations, women were well suited for work in a maximum-security prison. Communication skills were extremely important in such a charged environment; inmates often felt less threatened by women, less likely to engage in a clash of egos. Hubbard was the deputy warden at New Folsom on September 27, 1996, when fights broke out in the B yard. At nine o'clock in the morning she was standing beside her car in the prison parking lot, and she heard three shots being fired somewhere inside New Folsom. Everyone in the parking lot froze, waiting for the sound of more gunfire. After more shots were fired, Hubbard hurried into the prison, made her way to the B yard, and found it in chaos.

A group of Latino gang members had launched an attack on a group of African-American gang members, catching them by surprise and stabbing them with homemade weapons. The fighting soon spread to the other inmates in the exercise yard, who divided along racial lines. As many as 200 inmates were involved in the riot. Correctional officers instructed everyone in the yard to get down; they fired warning shots, rubber bullets, and then live rounds. When Hubbard arrived at the yard, about a hundred inmates had dropped to the ground and another hundred were still fighting. The captain in charge of the unit stood among a group of inmates, telling them, "Sit down, get down, we'll take care of this." Hubbard and the other officers circulated in the yard, calling prisoners by name, telling them to get down. It took thirty minutes to quell the riot. Twelve correctional officers were injured while trying to separate combatants. Six inmates were stabbed, and five were shot. Victor Hugo Flores, an inmate serving an eighteen-year sentence for voluntary manslaughter and attempted murder, was killed by gunfire.

Hubbard finds working in the California penal system to be stressful but highly rewarding. She tries to defuse tensions by talking and listening to the inmates on the yards. She and her officers routinely place themselves at great risk. Last year 2,583 staff members were assaulted by inmates in California. Thousands of the inmates are HIV-positive; thousands more carry hepatitis C. Officers have lately become the target of a new form of assault by inmates, known as gassing. Being "gassed" means being struck by a cup or bag containing feces and urine. The California prison system, especially its Level 4 facilities, is full of warring gangs—members of the Crips, the Bloods, the Fresno Bulldogs, the Aryan Brother-

hood, the Nazi Lowriders, the Mexican Mafia, and the Black Guerrilla Family, to name a few. In addition to the organized violence, there are random acts of violence. On June 15 of last year a correctional officer was attacked by an inmate in the infirmary at New Folsom. The officer, Linda Lowery, was savagely beaten and kicked, receiving severe head wounds. Her attacker was serving a four-year sentence for assaulting an officer.

California's correctional officers are not always the victims when violence occurs behind bars; in recent months they have been linked to several widely publicized acts of brutality. At Pelican Bay State Prison at least one officer conspired with inmates to arrange assaults on convicted child molesters. At Corcoran State Prison officers allegedly staged "gladiator days," in which rival gang members were encouraged to fight, staff members placed bets on the outcome, and matches often ended with inmates being shot. As the FBI investigates alleged abuses at Corcoran and allegations of an official cover-up, correctional officers are feeling misrepresented and unfairly maligned by the media—only adding to the tension in California's prisons.

The level of violence in the California penal system is actually lower today than it was a decade ago. But the rate of assaults among inmates has gradually climbed since its low point, in 1991. Studies have linked double-bunking and prison overcrowding with higher rates of stress-induced mental disorders, higher rates of aggression, and higher rates of violence. In the state's Level 4 prisons almost every cell is now double-bunked. The fact that more bloodshed has not occurred is a testament to the high-tech design of the new prisons and the skills of their officers. Nevertheless, Cal Terhune, the director of the California Department of Corrections, worries about how much more stress the system can bear, and about how long it can go without another riot. "We're sitting on a very volatile situation," Terhune says. "Every time the phone rings here, I wonder..."

THIRTY years ago California was renowned for the liberalism of its criminal-justice system. In 1968 an inmate bill of rights was signed into law by Ronald Reagan, then the governor of California. More than any other state, California

was dedicated to the rehabilitative ideal, to the belief that a prison could take a criminal and "cure" him, set him on the right path. California's prisons were notable for their many educational and vocational programs and their group-therapy sessions. In those days every state in the country had a system of indeterminate prison sentences. The legislature set the maximum sentence for a crime, and judges and parole boards tried to make the punishment fit the individual. California's system was the most indeterminate: the sentence for a given offense might be anything from probation to life. The broad

range of potential sentences gave enormous power to the parole board, known as the Adult Authority; a prisoner's release depended on its evaluation of how well his "treatment" was proceeding. One person might serve ten months and another person ten years for the same crime.

Although indeterminate sentencing had many flaws, one of its virtues was that it gave the state a means of controlling the size of the prison population. If prisons grew too full, the parole board could release inmates who no longer seemed to pose a threat to public safety. Governor Reagan used the Adult Authority to reduce the size of California's inmate population, giving thousands of prisoners an early release and closing one of the state's prisons. By the mid-1970s, however, the Adult Authority had come under attack from an unusual coalition of liberals, prisoners, and conservative advocates of law and order.

Liberals thought that the Adult Authority discriminated against minorities, making them serve longer sentences. Prisoners thought that it was unfair; after all, they were still in prison. Conservatives thought that it was too soft, allowing too many criminals back on the street too soon. And no one put much faith in the rehabilitative effects of prison. In 1971 seventeen inmates and seven staff members were killed in California prisons. The following year thirty-five inmates and one staff member were killed.

California was one of the first states in the nation to get rid of indeterminate sentencing. The state's new law required inmates to serve the sentence handed down by the judge, with an allowance for "good time," which might reduce a prison term by half. The law also amended the section of the state's penal code that declared the ultimate goals of impris-

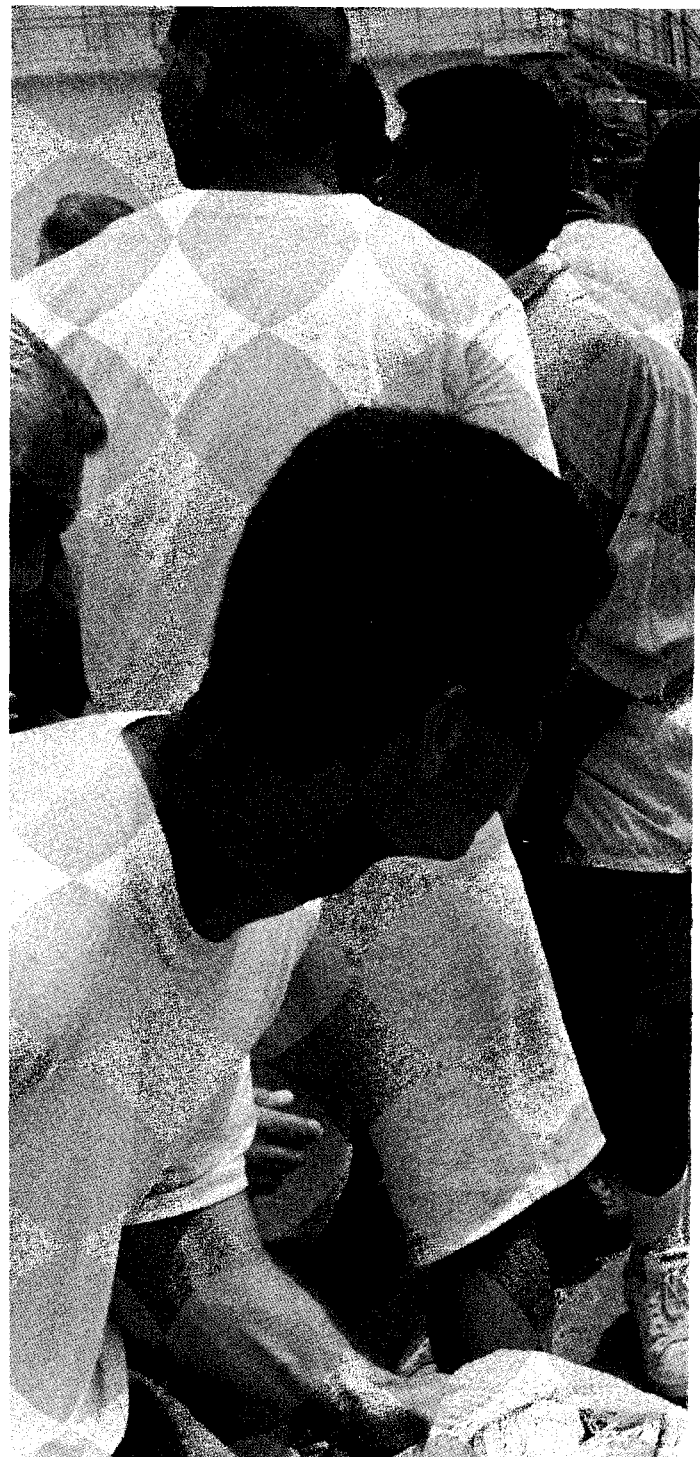
THE PRISON-
INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX IS NOT
ONLY A SET OF INTEREST
GROUPS AND INSTITUTIONS.
IT IS ALSO A STATE OF MIND.
THE LURE OF BIG MONEY
IS CORRUPTING THE
NATION'S CRIMINAL-JUSTICE
SYSTEM, REPLACING
NOTIONS OF PUBLIC SERVICE
WITH A DRIVE
FOR HIGHER PROFITS.

onment: the word "rehabilitation" was replaced by the word "punishment." In 1976 the bill was endorsed and signed into law by a liberal Democrat, Governor Jerry Brown.

As liberalism gave way to demands for law and order, California judges began to send a larger proportion of convicted felons to prison and to give longer sentences. The inmate population started to grow. Sentencing decisions made at the county level, by local prosecutors and judges, soon had a major impact on the state budget, which covered the costs of incarceration. Tax cuts mandated by Proposition 13 meant that county governments were strapped for funds and could not maintain local jails properly or pay for community-based programs that administered alternative sentences. Offenders who might once have been sent to a local jail or a halfway house were now sent to a state prison. California's criminal-justice system slowly but surely spun out of control. The state legislature passed hundreds of bills that required tough new sentences, but did not adequately provide for their funding. Judges sent people to prison without giving any thought to where the state would house them. And the Department of Corrections was left to handle the flood of new inmates, unable to choose how many it would accept or how many it would let go.

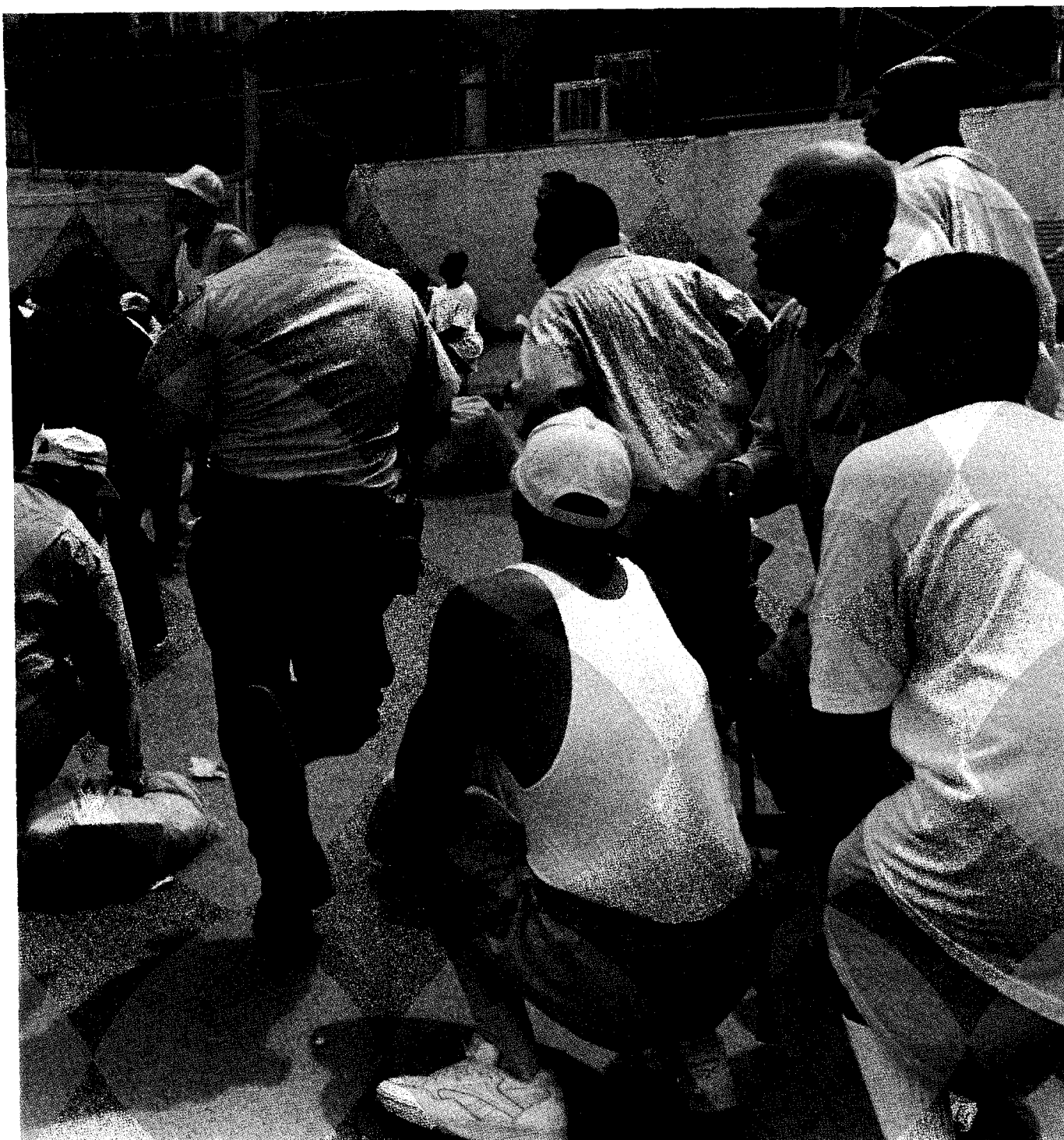
In 1977 the inmate population of California was 19,600. Today it is 159,000. After spending \$5.2 billion on prison construction over the past fifteen years, California now has not only the largest but also the most overcrowded prison system in the United States. The state Department of Corrections estimates that it will need to spend an additional \$6.1 billion on prisons over the next decade just to maintain the current level of overcrowding. And the state's jails are even more overcrowded than its prisons. In 1996 more than 325,000 inmates were released early from California jails in order to make room for offenders arrested for more-serious crimes. According to a report this year by the state's Little Hoover Commission, in many counties offenders who are convicted of a crime and given sentences of less than ninety days will not even be sent to jail. The state's backlog of arrest warrants now stands at about 2.6 million—the number of arrests that have not been made, the report says, largely because there's no room in the jails. According to one official estimate, counties will need to spend \$2.4 billion over the next ten years to build more jails—again, simply to maintain the current level of overcrowding.

The extraordinary demand for new prison and jail cells in California has diverted funds from other segments of the criminal-justice system, creating a vicious circle. The failure to spend enough on relatively inexpensive sanctions, such as drug treatment and probation, has forced the state to increase spending on prisons. Only a fifth of the felony convictions in California now lead to a prison sentence. The remaining four fifths are usually punished with a jail sentence, a term of probation, or both. But the jails have no room, and



the huge caseloads maintained by most probation officers often render probation meaningless. An ideal caseload is about twenty-five to fifty offenders; some probation officers in California today have a caseload of 3,000 offenders. More than half the state's offenders on probation will most likely serve their entire term without ever meeting or even speaking with a probation officer. Indeed, the only obligation many offenders on probation must now fulfill is mailing a postcard that gives their home address.

California parole officers, too, are overwhelmed by their



caseloads. The state's inmate population is not only enormous but constantly changing. Last year California sent about 140,000 people to prison—and released about 132,000. On average, inmates spend two and a half years behind bars, and then serve a term of one to three years on parole. During the 1970s each parole agent handled about forty-five parolees; today each agent handles about twice that number. The money that the state has saved by not hiring enough new parole agents is insignificant compared with the expense of sending parole violators back to prison.

A fight begins, Folsom prison, Represa, Calif.

About half the California prisoners released on parole are illiterate. About 85 percent are substance abusers. Under the terms of their parole, they are subjected to periodic drug tests. But they are rarely offered any opportunity to get drug treatment. Of the approximately 130,000 substance abusers in California's prisons, only 3,000 are receiving treatment behind bars. Only 8,000 are enrolled in any kind of pre-release program to help them cope with life on the outside. Violent

offenders, who need such programs most of all, are usually ineligible for them. Roughly 124,000 inmates are simply released from prison each year in California, given nothing more than \$200 and a bus ticket back to the county where they were convicted. At least 1,200 inmates every year go from a secure housing unit at a Level 4 prison—an isolation unit, designed to hold the most violent and dangerous inmates in the system—right onto the street. One day these predatory inmates are locked in their cells for twenty-three hours at a time and fed all their meals through a slot in the door, and the next day they're out of prison, riding a bus home.

Almost two thirds of the people sent to prison in California last year were parole violators. Of the roughly 80,000 parole violators returned to prison, about 60,000 had committed a technical violation, such as failing a drug test; about 15,000 had committed a property or a drug crime; and about 3,000 had committed a violent crime, frequently a robbery to buy drugs. The gigantic prison system that California has built at such great expense has essentially become a revolving door for poor, highly dysfunctional, and often illiterate drug abusers. They go in, they get out, they get sent back, and every year there are more. The typical offender being sent to prison in California today has five prior felony convictions.

THE California legislature has not authorized a new bond issue for prison construction since 1992, deadlocked over the cost. Meanwhile, the state's "Three Strikes, You're Out" law has been steadily filling prison cells with long-term inmates. Don Novey, the head of the California Correctional Peace Officers Association (CCPOA), helped to gain passage of the law. He now worries that if California's prison system becomes much more overcrowded, a federal judge may order a large-scale release of inmates. Novey has proposed keeping some nonviolent offenders out of prison, allowing judges to give them suspended sentences and a term of probation instead. He has also advocated a way to save money while expanding the penal system: build "mega-prisons." California already builds and operates the biggest prisons in the United States. A number of California prisons now hold more than 6,000 inmates—about six times the nationwide average. The mega-prisons proposed by the CCPOA would house up to 20,000 inmates. A few new mega-prisons, Novey says, could satisfy California's demand for new cells into the next century.

Correctional officials see prison overcrowding as grounds

for worry about potential riots, bloodshed, and court orders; others see opportunity. "It has become clear over the past several months," Doctor R. Crants said earlier this year, "that California is one of the most promising markets CCA has, with a burgeoning need for secure, cost-effective prison beds at all levels of government." In order to get a foothold in that market, CCA announced it would build three prisons in California entirely on spec—that is, without any contract to fill them. "If you build it in the right place," a CCA executive told *The Wall Street Journal*, "the prisoners will come."

Crants boasted to the *Tennessean* that California's private-prison industry will be dominated by "CCA alone." Executives at Wackenhut Corrections think otherwise. Wackenhut already houses almost 2,000 of California's minimum-security inmates at facilities in the state. The legislature has recently adopted plans to house an additional 2,000 minimum-security inmates in private prisons. Wackenhut and CCA have opened offices in Sacramento and hired expensive lobbyists. The CCPOA vows to fight hard against the private-prison companies and their anti-union tactics. "They can build whatever prisons they want," Don Novey says. "But the hell if they're going to run them." One of the new CCA prisons is rising in the Mojave Desert outside California City, at a cost of about \$100 million. The company is gambling

that cheap, empty prison beds will prove irresistible to California lawmakers. The new CCA facility promises to be a boon to California City once the inmates start arriving. The town has been hit hard by layoffs at Edwards Air Force Base, which is nearby. Mayor Larry Adams, asked why he wanted a prison, said, "We're a desperate city."

FACTORIES FOR CRIME

ALEXIS de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* is one of the most famous books ever written about the politics and culture of the United States. The original purpose of Tocqueville's 1831 journey to this country is less well known. He came to tour its prisons on behalf of the French government. The United States at the time was renowned in Europe for having created a whole new social institution: the penitentiary. In New York and Pennsylvania prisons were being designed not to punish inmates but to reform them. Solitary confinement, silence, and hard work were imposed in order to encourage spiritual and moral change. At some penitentiaries officials placed hoods over the heads of newcomers to isolate them from other inmates. After visiting American prisons Tocqueville and his travel-



New Folsom, Represa, Calif.

ing companion, Gustave de Beaumont, wrote that social reformers in the United States had been swept up in “the monomania of the penitentiary system,” convinced that prisons were “a remedy for all the evils of society.”

The historian David J. Rothman, author of *The Discovery of the Asylum* (1971), has noted one of the ironies of America’s early-nineteenth-century fondness for prisons. The idea of the penitentiary took hold at the height of Jacksonian democracy, when freedom and the spirit of the common man were being widely celebrated. “At the very moment that Americans began to pride themselves on the openness of their society, when the boundless frontier became the symbol of opportunity and equality,” Rothman observes, “notions of total isolation, unquestioned obedience, and severe discipline became the hallmarks of the captive society.” More than a century and a half later political rhetoric about small government and the virtues of the free market is being accompanied by an eagerness to deny others their freedom. The hoods now placed on inmates in the isolation units at maximum-security prisons are not intended to rehabilitate. They are designed to protect correctional officers from being bitten or spat upon.

The standard justification for today’s prisons is that they prevent crime. The rate of violent crime in the United States has indeed been declining since 1991. The political scientist James Q. Wilson, among many others, believes that the recent rise in the nation’s incarceration rate has been directly responsible for the decrease in violent crime. Although the validity of the theory seems obvious (murderers and rapists who are behind bars can no longer kill and rape ordinary citizens), it is difficult to prove. Michael Tonry, a professor of law and public policy at the University of Minnesota, is an expert on international sentencing policies and an advocate of alternative punishments for nonviolent offenders. He acknowledges that the imprisonment of almost two million Americans has prevented some crimes from being committed. “You could choose another two million Americans at random and lock them up,” Tonry says, “and that would reduce the number of crimes too.” But demographics and larger cultural trends may be responsible for most of the decline in violent crime. Over the past decade Canada’s incarceration rate has risen only slightly. Nevertheless, the rate of violent crime in Canada has been falling since 1991. Last year the homicide rate fell by nine percent. The Canadian murder rate has now reached its lowest level since 1969.

Christopher Stone, the head of New York’s Vera Institute of Justice, believes that prisons can be “factories for crime.” The average inmate in the United States spends only two years in prison. What happens during that time behind bars may affect how he or she will behave upon release. The lesson being taught in most American prisons—where violence, extortion, and rape have long been routine—is that the strong will always rule the weak. Inmates who display

the slightest hint of vulnerability quickly become prey. During the 1950s and 1960s prison gangs were formed in California and Illinois as a means of self-protection. Those gangs have now spread nationwide. The Mexican Mafia and the Aryan Brotherhood have gained power in Texas prisons. The Gangsta Killer Bloods and the Sex Money Murder Bloods have emerged in New York prisons. America’s prisons now serve as networking and recruiting centers for gang members. The differences between street gangs and prison gangs have become less distinct. The leaders of prison gangs increasingly direct illegal activity both inside and outside. A 1996 investigation by the *Chicago Tribune* found that gangs had gained extraordinary control over the state prisons in Illinois: formal classes at the Stateville prison law library had taught the history and rules of the Maniac Latin Disciples; a leader of the Gangster Disciples had at various times kept cellular phones, a color television, a stereo, a Nintendo Game Boy, a portable washing machine, and up to a hundred pounds of marijuana in his cell. Many of the customs, slang, and tattoos long associated with prison gangs have become fashionable among young people. In cities throughout America, the culture of the prisons is rapidly becoming the culture of the streets.

The spirit of every age is manifest in its public works, in the great construction projects that leave an enduring mark on the landscape. During the early years of this century the Panama Canal became President Theodore Roosevelt’s legacy, a physical expression of his imperial yearnings. The New Deal faith in government activism left behind huge dams and bridges, post offices decorated with murals, power lines that finally brought electricity to rural America. The interstate highway system fulfilled dreams of the Eisenhower era, spreading suburbia far and wide; urban housing projects for the poor were later built in the hopes of creating a Great Society.

“The era of big government is over,” President Bill Clinton declared in 1996—an assertion that has proved false in at least one respect. A recent issue of “Construction Report,” a monthly newsletter published by *Correctional Building News*, provides details of the nation’s latest public works: a 3,100-bed jail in Harris County, Texas; a 500-bed medium-security prison in Redgranite, Wisconsin; a 130-bed minimum-security facility in Oakland County, Michigan; two 200-bed housing pods at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility, in Iowa; a 350-bed juvenile correctional facility in Pendleton, Indiana; and dozens more. The newsletter includes the telephone numbers of project managers, so that prison-supply companies can call and make bids. All across the country new cellblocks rise. And every one of them, every brand-new prison, becomes another lasting monument, concrete and ringed with deadly razor wire, to the fear and greed and political cowardice that now pervade American society. ☛

How to avoid breakdowns. Nervous or otherwise.

When you're out for a long drive on a lonesome highway, the last thing you want to experience is a breakdown. Especially if it's the kind caused by so thoughtful, practical and reliable, it's an automobile that can help make your commute, and life, a lot less stressful. (Just think of it as therapy on wheels.) emotional baggage, quite comfortably. For your convenience, and sanity, we've included thoughtful touches just about everywhere. The controls and



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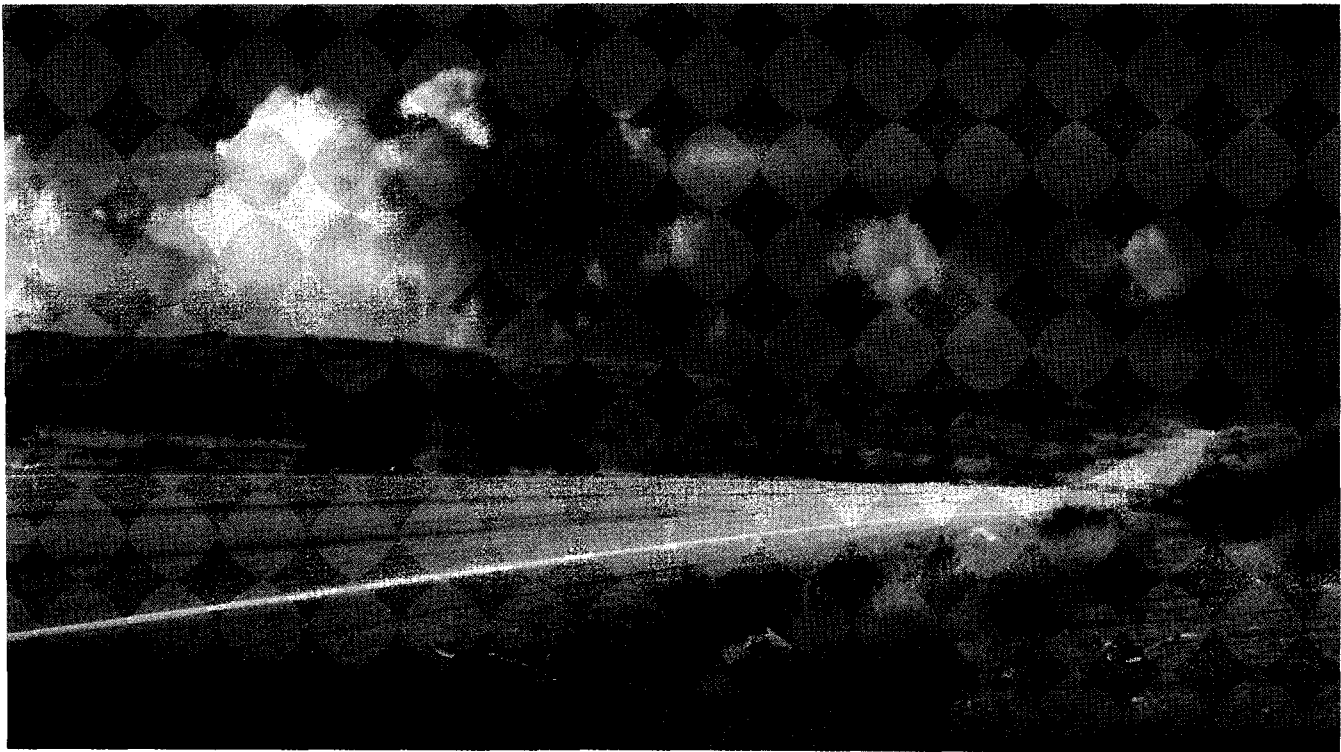
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Lost in Translation

by STEPHEN BUDIAISKY

Efforts to design software that can translate languages fluently have encountered a problem: how do you program common sense?

IN one famous episode in the British comedy series *Monty Python* a foreign-looking tourist clad in an outmoded leather trenchcoat appears at the entrance to a London shop. He marches up to the man behind the counter, solemnly consults a phrase book, and in a thick Middle European accent declares, "My hovercraft . . . is full of eels!"

Eventually the scene shifts to the Old Bailey courthouse, where the prisoner at the bar stands accused of intent to cause a breach of the peace for having published an English-Hungarian phrase book full of spurious translations. For example, the Hungarian phrase "Can you direct me to the railway station" is translated as "Please fondle my buttocks."

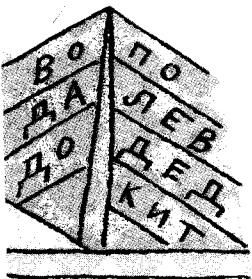
This episode is brought to mind by some recently available computer programs that claim to provide automatic translation between English and a number of other languages. Translation software that runs on mainframe computers has been used by government agencies for several decades, but with the advent of the Pentium chip, which packs the power of a mainframe into a desktop, such software can now easily be run on a personal computer. You can buy a program for translating in one direction between English and a major European language of your choice for as little as \$29.95. But what has really brought machine translation, or MT, into

the mainstream lately is two Internet sites that offer Spanish, French, German, Italian, and Portuguese translations free. Systran, a company that three decades ago pioneered the field under contracts from the U.S. government, provides its translator at [\[tal.com\]\(http://tal.com\) as part of AltaVista's Web site. \("Babelfish" is an allusion to a diminutive piscine character in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* that, when inserted in the ear, provides instant translation of any language.\) Babelfish the Web site lets you type in a block of text up to fifty words long, click on a button, and watch as, seconds later, a translation appears above your words.](http://babelfish.altavista.digit</p></div><div data-bbox=)

The second company to offer its services free (at least for now) is Globalink, a major retailer of translation software that as this article went to press had just been acquired by Lernout & Hauspie. Globalink's online translator, Comprendre, will exist in a different form under the new ownership. At www.lhs.com you can send E-mail or participate in a live multinational "chat" with translations to and from English.

When faced with criticism of their products' translations, MT vendors tend to invoke the "talking dog"—as in, Don't be picky; it's amazing that a dog can talk at all. And in fairness, the outright breaches of the peace that these programs cause are far fewer than one might expect. When the field was still in its infancy, in the early 1960s, an apocryphal tale went around about a computer that the CIA had built to translate between English and Russian: to test the machine, the programmers decided to have it translate a phrase into Russian and then translate the result back into English, to see if they'd get the same words they started with. The director of the CIA was invited to do the honors; the programmers all gathered expectantly around the console to watch as the director typed in the test words: "Out of sight, out of mind." The computer silently ground through its calculations. Hours passed. Then, suddenly, magnetic tapes whirled, lights blinked, and a printer clattered out the result: "Invisible insanity."

When I tried out Systran's Babelfish and Globalink's Com-



prende, Babelfish handled that highly figurative phrase with aplomb, rendering it in idiomatic, even nuanced, French as “*Hors de la vue, hors de l’esprit*.” Both systems also translated “My hovercraft is full of eels” into French and back and into Italian and back without a glitch. Competent performances were turned in on “We have nothing to fear but fear itself,” “Don’t bank on it,” “I fought the law and the law won,” “Wild thing, you make my heart sing” (“*La chose sauvage, vous faites mon coeur chanter*”), “I shot an elephant in my pajamas,” “Can you recommend a good, inexpensive restaurant?,” and “The komodo dragon is the world’s largest living lizard” (“*Le dragon du komodo est le plus grand lézard vivant du monde*”).

But the Pythonesque possibilities were all too manifest in what Babelfish did to “I have lost my passport.” After a trip into French it came back as “I have destroyed my passport”—arguably better than “I have means pass lost,” by way of German. “All’s well that ends well” by way of Portuguese became “All gush out that the extremities gush out,” and “Would you like to come back to my place?” returned from German as “Did you become to like my workstation to return?”

Most translations fell somewhere between impressive and nonsensical; in general they were surprisingly understandable, if odd and stilted. Particularly fetching was the tendency of both Babelfish and Comprendre to finish English-to-French round trips having picked up a diction vaguely reminiscent of Inspecteur Clouseau’s: “Where is the room of the men?” “Do you like to return to my hotel?” All that was missing was an occasional substitution of “zee” for “the.” And some uncannily Teutonic cadences emerged from excursions into German and back. “A penny, which becomes secured, is an acquired penny” has a stolidly Germanic pedantry about it. “Pepsi-Cola strikes the point, twelve full ounces, those is much” was perfect stage German.

The computer talks this way for very much the same reason that Inspecteur Clouseau does—both use literal renderings of foreign idiom. Corny imitations of a French accent abound with the likes of “And now, would madame care for the dinner?” and “The car, she is magnificent” because they more or less follow the syntactical peculiarities of the original. In French one eats “the dinner,” not “dinner,” and all nouns are assigned to either the masculine or the feminine gender.

THE earliest computer translators were even more literal; they were “direct systems,” which means they looked up each word or phrase in a lexicon and substituted an equivalent word or phrase in the target language. It ought to have been obvious that this approach had serious shortcomings. But such was the “naive optimism”—as Eduard Hovy, a researcher at the University of Southern California and the president of the Association for Machine Translation in the Americas, puts it—that it took a surprisingly long time for

practitioners to realize that they had a lot of hard work ahead of them to produce even passable translations. In the 1950s the surging Cold War demand for translations of thousands of pages of Russian technical articles figured into the exciting belief, held by many computer scientists, that the new, programmable computers could duplicate the human mind through “artificial intelligence.” Andrew Booth, an early MT researcher, recalls that right after the Second World War he tried to get the Rockefeller Foundation to fund the development of a computer that would perform the tedious calculations required to deduce a chemical compound’s three-dimensional structure from the pattern of x-rays it diffracted. That was a task perfectly suited to a computer, but the foundation was not interested. It wanted a machine that would explore how people think. Booth obligingly switched gears, proposed to build a language translator, and got his funding.

Compounding the naiveté was a simplistic analogy advanced by Norbert Wiener, a brilliant and eccentric mathematician at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who was at the forefront of computer theory: computers were used during the war to help break enemy codes; decoding is a matter of transforming a set of symbols; language translation could be the same.

Of course, it isn’t. One huge snag is word order. Forty to 50 percent of the words in a typical English sentence end up in a different position in the corresponding French sentence. In French, adjectives often appear after the nouns they modify; objects of a verb often appear before the verb. In going from English to Japanese, the rearrangement rate hits almost 100 percent, partly because in Japanese—as in most languages, with the notable exceptions of English and the Romance languages—verbs regularly come at the end of the sentence. Getting the word order wrong not only makes for horrible-sounding sentences but also can change meaning, often in comic ways.

Another problem with the direct approach is the sheer amount of computational resources required. To carry out direct substitution effectively, a lexicon must include every inflected form of every verb and every plural of every noun: separate translations have to be provided for “walk,” “walks,” “walking,” “walked,” and so on. Idioms can be handled as chunks (for instance, “got out,” “got by,” and “got even,” each of which is expressed by a different verb in French). But if other words interrupt those phrases (“I got the eels out of my hovercraft”), a direct system is helpless—there is just no way to anticipate every possible combination of words.

Like all modern translation systems, the latest products from Globalink and Systran seek to overcome these limitations by incorporating at least some grammatical rules for figuring out what words are performing what functions in a sentence. The programs literally construct a parse tree, just as students used to do in school. The computers’ lexicons

specify the parts of speech that might apply to each word; the parser then looks up grammatical rules that describe how different parts of speech can be combined, and tries to identify noun phrases, modifiers, auxiliary verbs, and so on. Once the sentence is parsed, the resulting syntax tree is “transferred” to the target language with the aid of a second set of rules governing grammatical combinations in that language.

Much of what is impressive about these programs lies in such “transfer” algorithms. The komodo-dragon sentence, for example, required a substantial amount of word rearrangement to come out in even passable French. To say “the world’s largest living lizard” in French, one says literally “the most big lizard living in the world”: the sequence ABCD becomes BDCA—a 75 percent rearrangement.

Parsing carries with it a certain amount of clarification as a bonus. Words that in the source language can be both verbs and nouns (“Book him, Danno” versus “Give me the book, Danno”; “Fight the good fight”) are distinguished automatically by a computer that recognizes valid sentence structures, and a certain number of semantically absurd translations are weeded out in this manner too. For example, Babelfish botched Groucho Marx’s punch line “What an elephant was doing in my pajamas, I’ll never know” by translating the first three words as “*Quel éléphant*,” a construction bearing the meaning embodied in a phrase like “What a pity” (“*Quel dommage*”); but Comprendre recognized that such a rendering produced a grammatically unfeasible sequence in the sentence as a whole, and instead came up with “*Ce qu’un éléphant*”—“That which an elephant.”

ONE thing demonstrated by all of this effort is that language is far more complex than even linguists ever imagined. Yorick Wilks, of Sheffield University, in England, is one of a number of MT researchers who have been developing automated programs that comb through a corpus of text to derive grammatical rules empirically. The best known of these corpora is the Penn Tree Bank, which contains millions of words of text to which parse trees have been attached; the computer sifts through thousands upon thousands of sentences and “reads” the rules implied by those trees. This whole approach flies in the face of the tradition of Noam Chomsky, which, Wilks says, led linguists to believe that “they know language through intuition and introspection and don’t need ‘evidence.’” Wilks’s lab has developed an English grammar that so far contains 18,000 rules—many times the number that linguists ever dreamed would be necessary.

The entire exercise of machine translation has been sobering—even “depressing,” Hovy says—because the best MT systems so far appear to have less to do with linguistic breakthroughs at a conceptual level than with simple doggedness. “It doesn’t matter how brain-damaged the approach,” Hovy says. “The older the system, the better”—be-

cause the programs need repeated and extensive fine-tuning, lexicon building, and tweaking of the rules.

Even more galling is the impressive performance turned in a few years ago by a system that made a total mockery of the theoretical excursions of linguists. This system was designed by a group of physicists at IBM who got the idea of treating translation as a problem of simple probability. Rather than working out grammatical rules themselves, they created a program to exploit the expert knowledge built into actual translated texts. The idea was brilliant stupidity: a huge corpus of bilingual text—a chunk of the proceedings of the Canadian Parliament, which by law must be published in both French and English—was fed into the machine. The computer then began tallying coincidences in the crudest fashion possible: if the word “dog” appeared in an English sentence, what words appeared in the corresponding French sentence? After tallying the French words in thousands of sentences that corresponded to “dog”-bearing English sentences, the computer had in hand a table of probabilities: “*chien*” might appear, say, 99 percent of the time; much less frequent would be “*veinard*” (“lucky dog!”) or “*talonner*” (“to dog one’s footsteps”); least frequent of all would be every other word that had happened to appear in one “dog” sentence or another—everything from “*anticonstitutionnel*” to “*biscuiterie*” to “*pamplousse*.” Whenever the machine subsequently encountered “dog” in an English text it was given to translate, it substituted the most probable translation—“*chien*.” With enough computing power it’s possible to create probability tables for combinations of two or even three words, which can distinguish, for instance, “lucky dog” from “bird dog.” (Beyond about three words the number of permutations grows too enormous for any existing computer to handle.)

The IBM system then tossed all the words in its translated sentence into a bag and let the laws of probability decide what order to put them in. Let’s say the words in the bag were “*chien*,” “*maison*,” “*est*,” “*la*,” “*le*,” and “*dans*.” Although it is unlikely that any Canadian parliamentarians ever uttered the words “*Le chien est dans la maison*,” the millions of sentences they have uttered provide plenty of statistics on how often in a French sentence each of these words directly follows another of them. The words “*la*” and “*le*” almost never follow each other; “*chien*” almost always follows “*le*” (the masculine) rather than “*la*” (the feminine); “*dans*” almost never precedes “*est*” but often follows it; and so on. The computer would simply string the words together in different combinations until it came up with the one that contained the most statistically probable sequence of word pairs.

The embarrassing thing is that the IBM system performed almost as well as systems that incorporated the latest in highfalutin linguistic theory. With no programmed intelligence, no rules about meaning or grammar or word order, statistical systems got as many as 50 percent of their translated sentences correct, whereas the rate is about 65 percent for sys-

tems like Babelfish. Hovy says that developers of statistical systems were going around bragging, "Every time I fire a linguist, my system gets better."

The real failings of MT have less to do with the state of linguistic theory than with the fact that computers don't have any common sense. Language is full of ambiguity and multiple meanings that a correct reading of syntax goes only a short way toward sorting out. For example, Babelfish and Comprendre missed both the meanings in Groucho's line "We took some pictures of the native girls, but they're not developed yet," translating "they" into the default masculine form—even though both girls and pictures are feminine in French. Is a "bank" a place to put money, the edge of a riverbed, or the side-to-side slope of a racetrack? A five-year-old child can grasp the differences in meaning, but getting a computer to do so is another matter. Thanks to the grammatical structure of the sentence, Babelfish correctly established that "book" in "Book him, Danno" was a verb rather than a noun. But lacking common sense, it went on to translate the phrase as "*Réservez-le, Danno*"—in the sense of "Book a table" or "Book a hotel room."

In other words, semantics is the key to MT, and semantics is a matter of a lot more than linguistics—it requires real-world knowledge. Indeed, one can get near-perfect translations with just about any system by limiting its lexicon to a narrow, specialized area in which there is no semantic ambiguity. Canadian radio stations translate weather bulletins from English to French every fifteen minutes. In 1974, because the professional translators were getting bored (how many times can one translate "fog this morning"?), Richard Kittredge, at the University of Montreal's machine-translation unit, was asked to develop a program to handle the task. With a lexicon of just a few hundred words, his program achieves an accuracy rate of more than 90 percent.

A major effort now under way in MT circles is to come up with elaborate taxonomies of meaning that will in effect duplicate the real-world knowledge that allows human beings effortlessly to know which words relate to which in a sentence and which of various meanings the speaker intends. This, of course, is virtually equivalent to the challenge of artificial intelligence in toto—creating a computer that thinks, or at least comes close enough to thinking that we can't tell the difference. Hovy and colleagues at the University of Southern California have developed an "ontology" (available on the Web at a site dubbed Ontosaurus), which sorts 90,000 concepts into a branching hierarchy according to their fundamental meaning and the way they are treated in language. The universe is divided into qualities, processes, objects, and interpersonal things; an object can in turn be a social object, a physical object, or a conscious being; and so on through multiple hierarchical layers.

The holy grail for many people in machine translation is to use a tree like this to reduce any sentence to a pure de-

scription of meaning in an "interlingua." This can then be reassembled into a sentence in any language using a grammar-driven generator peculiar to that target language. But no one seems to be holding his breath.

Except, perhaps, professional translators. "I have people here who still feel threatened, definitely," says Dale Bostad, who works in the translation branch of the National Air Intelligence Center, at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, in Ohio. Translators are, not unexpectedly, scornful of MT, but they are also undeniably nervous about it. Babelfish's 65 percent accuracy rate on general text is terrible, but not quite so terrible that it doesn't pay to use it in many situations. A professional translator gets about ten to fifteen cents a word, and one who works in a tough language like Chinese can charge three times as much. So if a person's aim is to take a quick look at what a document is about (the bread and butter of intelligence work and, for that matter, commerce), MT can be invaluable. Brian Garr, Globalink's chief technology officer, told me, "Our biggest challenge is setting people's expectations properly. I wouldn't use [our products] to write a manual on nuclear devices." But few applications are so demanding. About 20 percent of communication on the Internet takes place in languages other than English, and to companies that sell their wares on the Web, translation—even bad translation—can make the difference between getting an order and not. Globalink offered a gizmo for \$100 a month that allowed whatever material was posted on a company's Web site to be read in five languages; its new owner will offer something similar.

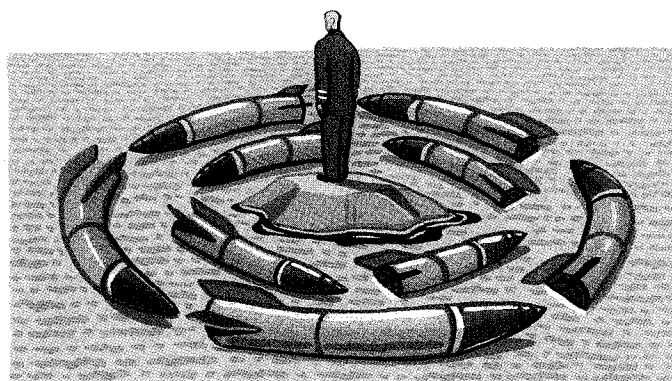
Another major growth area for MT is the European Union, which employs about 2,000 translators to handle eleven languages. Only about 10 percent of its translations are done with Systran systems, but the figure is growing rapidly, as nontranslator bureaucrats realize that they can use the program directly on the EU computer network when they want a quick translation.

Dale Bostad thinks the biggest payoff may come from combining computers and people in a way that exploits the natural talents of each. A document can be given a once-over by MT, and a professional translator can then clean up the glitches. Bostad is developing software that will automatically flag the iffy sentences generated by machine translators' output (such as those containing acronyms, unfamiliar words, or improbable word sequences), so that the human beings can focus effort where it is needed most. Working in tandem with an MT system, Bostad finds, some people can produce eighteen pages an hour, whereas the standard quota for a professional government translator is five to six pages a day. Younger translators in particular have embraced this approach, Bostad says. Their attitude toward computers is, If you can't beat them, join them.

Or, in the words of Babelfish: "If you cannot strike it, connect them." ☛

America's Magenot Line

by PAUL BRACKEN



Our bases in Asia are becoming more vulnerable to attack by ballistic missiles. Defending them will be very expensive and might provoke even larger missile deployments. At stake is the United States' reputation as the world's lone superpower

ALTHOUGH nearly every review of U.S. foreign policy since the end of the Cold War has concluded that America must stay militarily engaged in East Asia, the costs and hazards of remaining there are never explored. The military organizations of East Asia are on the verge of a major breakthrough that will inevitably encumber the greatest military power in the region: the United States. The problem for America is not that rogue states are trying to make trouble. Nor is it that China is challenging America, unless possessing the semblance of an advanced military itself constitutes a challenge. Rather, the gradual, routine military modernization of East Asia—specifically the development of ballistic missiles—is transforming military geography and making America's bases there, its “forward



bases,” vulnerable. Viewing the military modernization that inevitably accompanies economic modernization—which every Western nation has gone through—as a presumptuous challenge to the United States virtually ensures confrontation in Asia. How this new capacity is interpreted, and

whether a futile attempt to oppose it will lead to a new Cold War, is for the United States the central strategic question of the twenty-first century.

When East Asia's military power was measured in peasant infantry divisions, their limited reach allowed America to maintain a presence close to Asia without being threatened in return. Against peasant armies, even if they were upgraded by tanks and artillery, the United States was overwhelmingly powerful. Against their labor we had military capital.

But Asia no longer squanders human life in peasant charges against Western firepower, as Mao Zedong, Kim Il Sung, and Ho Chi Minh once did. Economic growth makes life more precious, in Asia as in Europe. In place of enormous armies shaping national identity through armed struggle against colonial and capitalist oppressors, advanced-technology weapons have become the new hallmarks of successful statehood and the symbols of progress.

The U.S. strategy of “forward engagement” means using ground, naval, and air forces in East Asia to exert military dominance in the region to stabilize international politics there. It was conceived when U.S. power in the region was unquestioned. Forward engagement is practical when small dispersed forces can efficiently dominate a vast geography. But such dominance cannot last much longer in Asia. Very soon forward engagement there will have to be actively defended, or re-evaluated, as what was an efficient strategy becomes costly, with fresh investments in defensive missile systems needed to shield America’s presence. Absent some sober rethinking, forward engagement is likely to produce an American Maginot Line around Asia’s rim, as myopic demands to stay there automatically lead to costly missile defenses.

The American foreign-policy community loves simple choices. The policy process essentially maps a problem, no matter how complex, on binary possibilities. The foreign-policy community debates whether China will follow a policy of cooperation or of confrontation with the United States. Reality is not so simple.

For China to halt routine military development would entail a level of cooperation that would mean virtual unilateral disarmament. It is not a case of embracing or rejecting arms control, as is usually made out in U.S. foreign-policy debates (another binary choice). For the United States

to remain militarily superior in East Asia, China would have to forgo the missiles that her neighbors (Russia, India, Pakistan, North Korea) have, and that are cheap compared with bombers or aircraft carriers.

China is not going to reconstruct a five-million-man infantry armed with rifles as the backbone of her security. But China’s unwillingness to forgo routine military modernization might well be seen in the United States as a challenge to forward engagement in Asia at a time when America’s position there is already stretched thin.

A *Superpower Lite*

AFTER the Cold War, Washington reorganized its military forces and strategy, shifting the emphasis from Europe to Asia. From 1988 to 1996 the strength of the armed forces, active-duty and reserve, was cut from 3.3 million to 2.4 million. Two hundred and ten thousand soldiers were removed from Europe—86 percent of the total reduction in active-duty personnel. Numbers in the Middle East actually saw a small increase, and those in the Pacific were cut by only 32,000. For its investment in East Asia, Washington gets more than it deserves. The United States may be the greatest military power in the most critical region of the world, but our thin deployments there and their relatively low price tag make us more a superpower lite. U.S. military power in East Asia is concentrated in three vital staging areas: Guam, Japan, and South Korea. As long as declining post-Cold War defense budgets can maintain the superior ability that defines superpower status, our global leadership is politically palatable.



But the assumption that the price of leadership is declining is invalid. Such optimism is based on extrapolation from a particular moment—after the Gulf War was won and the Soviet Union fell, and before East Asia had moved beyond research-and-development programs and begun to deploy ballistic missiles in quantity.

The spectacular images of technological invincibility from American wizard weapons in the Gulf War make forward engagement an easy policy to sell to the public. In the world of CNN and PBS the war seems to have consisted largely of U.S. laser-guided missiles zapping Iraqi buildings with pinpoint accuracy. Among the Joint Chiefs of Staff, however, the most enduring image is a photograph showing the supplies needed to fight the war—an iron mountain of arms and munitions that the armed forces constructed in Saudi Arabia from August of 1990 to January of 1991. The Gulf War was a testament to the extraordinary ability of the United States to move enough equipment halfway around the world to build a military base in the middle of a desert. Forward engagement depends on pre-existing forward bases. A military force that has no airfields or ports to accept reinforcements is impotent. Without bases there can be no concentration of military power: weapons cannot be stored, let alone massed for use. The vulnerability of bases is America's singular military weakness in Asia. Naval forces are not a substitute for land bases. Aircraft carriers and other ships cannot generate anything like the military power or psychological effect of fixed bases.

Ballistic missiles are made to destroy bases. They can disarm an opponent before he can move to an offensive position. It is nearly impossible to engage in military operations where incoming warheads are bursting, because of the danger to troops, secondary explosions of ammunition,

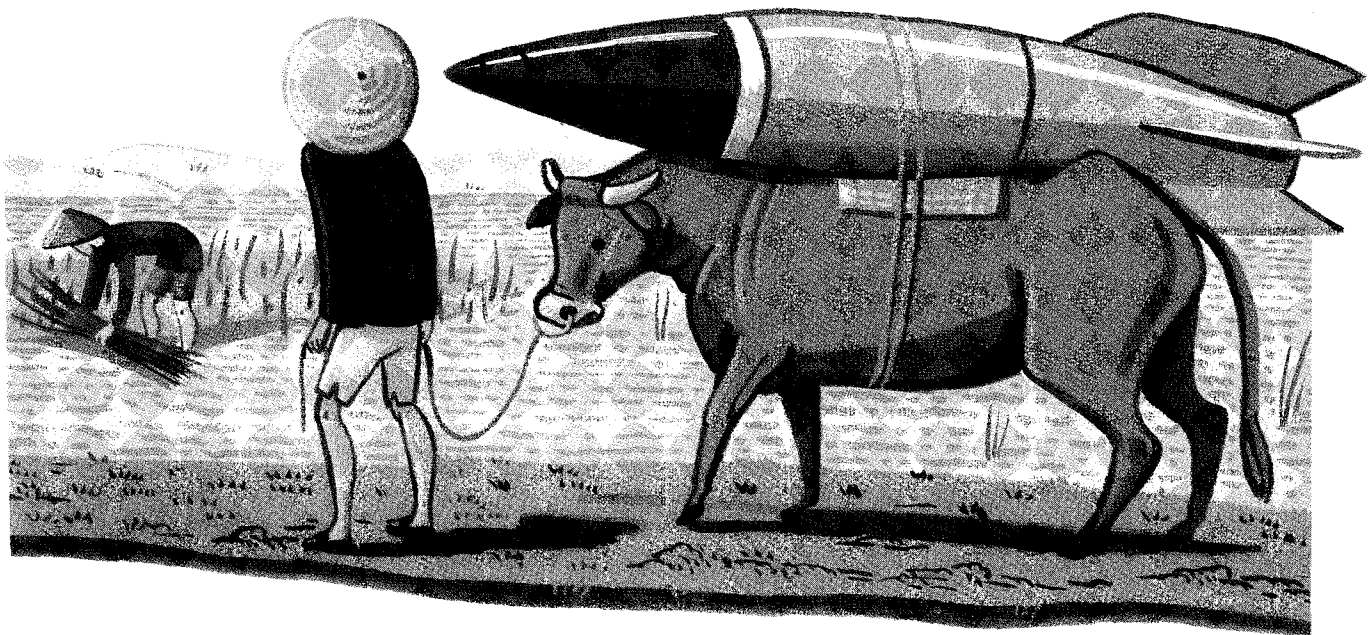
and the disruption to the maintenance of complex weapons. And if incoming missiles contain atomic, chemical, or biological weapons, or even the threat of these, forward engagement without active defense is hopeless.

B *Weapons of Mass Destruction*

BECAUSE of the new threat from ballistic missiles, America's superpower-lite strategy in Asia hinges on arms control, which has been somewhat successful. That Beijing has agreed to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, for instance, which bans all testing of nuclear warheads, is a major diplomatic victory for Washington. China is probably ten years behind the United States in miniaturizing its nuclear weapons to fit into battlefield missiles, and this treaty essentially halts its further progress.

However, thinking about arms control as a scorecard that totes up advances and setbacks misses a larger pattern. Arms control is now being used to sustain asymmetrical advantage. By locking countries into a low state of military development, arms control lets the United States maintain its superiority on the cheap.

In arguing for arms control the United States can claim that such agreements are in the general interest of mankind—a case much easier to defend publicly than one based on cold calculations of strategic advantage. Placing arms control at the center of diplomacy also makes it seem as if a new cooperative security system is emerging, in which countries go out of their way not to threaten one another. Yet reality is not so simple. To preserve the situation in which the greatest military power in Asia is the United



Even if some ballistic missiles can be shot down, Asia's missiles put the United States on the technological defensive. The superior U.S. military position has always rested on technological advantage. Now that advantage is shifting to the East.

States, not any Asian country, arms-control agreements must prevent ballistic missiles from rendering impotent America's system of bases, the key to our forward-engagement strategy.

The problem is fundamental, because missiles are changing the military geography throughout Asia. The rivalry between Pakistan and India is a case in point. Both sides are developing long-range missiles and nuclear warheads, bringing new dimensions to an old antagonism. And China and India can now reach each other, as they could not with armies of infantry separated by the Himalayas. China can also threaten India indirectly by building up Pakistan's missile force. Similarly,

Israel once worried only about its immediate neighbors, Egypt and Syria. Now its major problem is Iran, because the range of Tehran's missiles has increased such that they can now reach Tel Aviv. The military space in the Middle East has grown, from one where tank and air forces were strategic instruments to one where missiles dominate.

The question is how the world's only military superpower will adapt to these changes.

countries are more dangerous than others. But missiles are becoming endemic throughout Asia.

The spread of missiles is greatly assisted by techniques originally used in international business. Iraq's military buildup in the 1980s is illustrative. The government operated hand in hand with multinational corporations. Saddam Hussein schooled his engineers in the West, bought difficult-to-make weapons components from Europe, the United States, Japan, and the Soviet Union, used management consultants, and relied on engineering contract workers from Russia and North Korea to build his arsenal.

Recently another innovation has appeared, one that could have been taken from a Harvard Business School case study on how to internationalize a business rapidly. Scud-missile "knock-down kits" are appearing, courtesy of China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. Knock-down kits are familiar to anyone involved in international business; the idea was developed by the multinational automobile giants Ford, Toyota, and General Motors, to sell unassembled cars in developing countries, where the kits could be assembled in "screwdriver" plants. They permit a very rapid expansion of production capacity without the bother of providing infrastructure. Now Syria is opening an assembly plant for Scud-missile knock-down kits. Management innovation of this sort, and not merely the missile itself, is changing the Asian military landscape.

China has married its considerable engineering knowledge to similar international linkages, in order to produce organizations far more sophisticated than anything devised by Saddam Hussein. It is not just that Russia is selling navigation and communications equipment to China. Rather, an understanding of how the technologies work has spread, and new technical institutes have been set up to exploit them. The techno-managerial focus of China's armed forces marks a dramatic change from the political focus of the Maoist era, which was reflected in the world's largest infantry.

Military Transformation

TECHNOLOGIES of wealth and war have always been related. Underlying the problem facing the United States is the spread of technology from Western nations to a wider group of countries, with Asian ones predominant. Asia's industrialization entails military transformation, because it leads to a greater capacity to absorb technology, which further stimulates demand for technology. It is a momentous shift that is barely appreciated in the West—one as irreversible as the Industrial Revolution. Iraq, Iran, Syria, Israel, Pakistan, India, China, and North Korea all have ballistic-missile programs. No doubt some of these

Missile Knowledge

EAST Asia is developing military technologies at an ever-increasing pace. Chinese ballistic missiles demonstrate this fast learning curve. In 1995 and 1996 Beijing used a series of missile tests to intimidate Taiwan, in response to what China perceived as Taiwanese offenses: President Lee Teng-hui's visit to the United States in June of 1995 and his flirtations with Taiwanese independence during the elections of March, 1996. The missiles carried research equipment, but their payloads could just as easily have been warheads.

Nearly all attention to these tests in the United States centered on the question of what the Chinese leaders were

*A private mansion. A girl's college.
A civil war hospital.*

Needless to say, it makes a fascinating inn.

Today was a somber day regarding Beth, one of our Martha girls, who had been caring for the Yankee officer Captain John Stoves, who was captured near the school and carried badly wounded to the third floor. It seems they formed some attachment. She might have strength, ebbed, he called out, "Play something, Beth... I'm going." So she played her fiddle for him again as he faded. When the doctor came in, she told him, "He has been pardoned, sir, by an officer higher than General Lee. Captain Stoves is dead." Then dear Beth took the Syphoid and died. Today we buried her next to Captain Stoves in the Green Springs Cemetery.



It began in 1832 as a mansion for the Preston family, then a quaint girl's college, and, briefly, a respite from the turbulence of civil war. In 1934 it was converted to an inn for retreating travelers. Throughout the years, it has been different things to different people. But it has always been accommodating. One visit here and, doubtless, you will have your own stories to tell. A testimony to the rich legacy you'll find at all Camberley Hotels. Become a part of our history.



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up to with this missile diplomacy. What were they trying to signal? Was it an indication that the political leaders were bowing to pressure from the army, and if so, what did this say about the future direction of Chinese foreign policy? More important than this version of Chinese Kremlinology is what the tests showed about China's missile knowledge.

Over eight months Beijing substantially improved the accuracy of its missiles, enhancing their capacity to strike precise targets in Taiwan. In the first tests, in July of 1995, the Chinese fired two DF missiles daily for three straight days. The DF 15 (for "Dong Feng," or "East Wind") is a mobile missile with a range of 600 miles. It is launched from a trailer, which can be hidden from satellite or aerial reconnaissance in the same way that Saddam Hussein hid his Scuds from U.S. air attack during the Gulf War.

These tests were not a success. Of six missiles fired, one had to be destroyed over China because of a guidance malfunction, and two others hit the outer edge of the target zone. But eight months later, in March of 1996, matters had changed considerably. In this test four missiles were launched at two target areas in the East and South China Seas—one near the Taiwanese port of Kaohsiung and the other near the port of Keelung. This time all four missiles landed with near pinpoint accuracy.

This was an extraordinary achievement. In 1958 the Atlas, the first American long-range missile, was accurate only within one mile. Since accuracy is vital in the nuclear era, much research has been devoted to improving it. Still, not until the early 1980s did the U.S. Minuteman III and Pershing II missiles achieve accuracies measured in hundreds of feet or less. Likewise, in the late 1950s the Soviet SS 8 missile had an accuracy of one mile, and only with the SS 18s and 19s, in the early 1980s, did the Soviets achieve accuracies of a few hundred feet. What took the United States and the Soviet Union twenty-five years to learn took China eight months.

The implications are ominous for Taiwan, which depends on its modern infrastructure to maintain its place in the world. With

forty-five missiles China could virtually close Taiwan's ports, airfields, waterworks, and power plants, and destroy the oil-storage facilities of a nation that needs continual replenishment from the outside world. Accurate missiles would permit this with minimal civilian casualties, using conventional warheads in attacks no larger than those the United States has launched against Iraq on two occasions since the Gulf War. Taiwan is clearly a potential flashpoint between the United States and China. Zbigniew Brzezinski has even argued that the United States should intervene to stop a Chinese takeover of Taiwan, because it would so damage American geopolitical interests in the whole Asia-Pacific region. But before making Taiwan the centerpiece of U.S. strategy in Asia, and before going to war with China, Washington needs to think through what it is doing. For five decades the United States militarily dominated Asia by operating from forward bases that were secure and by sailing warships that were immune from attack. With the increased reach of Chinese missiles, this era is rapidly coming to a close.

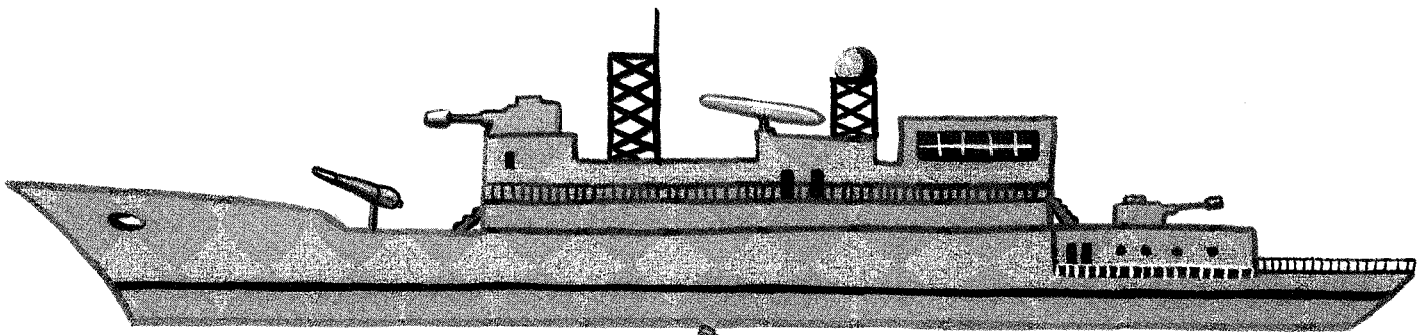
The National Defense Panel, a Pentagon advisory body, has highlighted this issue. Its December, 1997, report *Transforming Defense: National Security in the 21st Century* states,

Even if we retain the necessary bases and port infrastructure to support forward deployed forces, they will be vulnerable to strikes that could reduce or neutralize their utility. Precision strikes, weapons of mass destruction, and cruise and ballistic missiles all present threats to our forward presence, particularly as stand-off ranges increase. So, too, do they threaten access to strategic geographic areas. Widely available national and commercial space-based systems providing imagery, communication, and position location will greatly multiply the vulnerability of fixed and, perhaps, mobile forces as well.

Most Pentagon studies focus on war, however, and fail to make the distinction between actually using missiles and threatening to use them. Their non-use could be more significant than their use. It does not follow that if China were to obtain a wide-ranging and accurate missile capacity, it would be inclined to launch its missiles against U.S. bases. But if forward engagement is to mean anything, it needs credible military power on the Asian periphery, and the very possibility that China *could* hit U.S. forward bases with ballistic missiles erodes our credibility, especially when those missiles could carry chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons. Astute Pentagon players are concerned that this credibility gap creates forward hostages rather than forward bases—hostages that could be manipulated to expose the precarious position of the world's only superpower.

The capacity to strike, as distinct from actually striking, could force the United States and its host nations to think

Whether it takes five years or fifteen is irrelevant. Military access to Asia will be far more difficult in the future than it has been in the past. This anti-access trend affects the United States more than any other country.



twice about reinforcing forward bases in the first place, if doing so might trigger an attack and major escalation. Forward movements might thus increasingly be seen as likelier to escalate a crisis than to dampen it. Reluctance to run the risk of drawing fire could be considerable, and would certainly strain the most breakable part of forward engagement—host-nation political approval. Few countries would actually want to attack U.S. bases. But many would like to attack America's status as the world's lone super-power.

Missile Defense

THE United States is reacting to these developments with a major initiative in defensive missiles—that is, missiles that can shoot down ballistic missiles. Missile defense has been around for a long time. But in the past its purpose was chiefly the protection of the U.S. homeland from Soviet attack. Now missile defense is considered crucial to protect forward bases. The 1995 Pentagon study *United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region* asserts that missile defense plays “a key role” and is “essential to counter long range ballistic missile delivery systems in the inventory of many East Asian nations.”

Shooting down a missile is a lot like hitting a bullet with another bullet. But missiles travel faster than bullets, and they explode. In the compressed time

available defensive missiles must be fired very close to an attacking missile's launch time; otherwise they are likely to miss their target.

In 1993 an important test of defensive missiles showed how anxious the Pentagon was about ballistic-missile attacks on bases. Chemical weapons are best delivered not as a single bomb package but as a bundle of bomblets. Syria's Scud C missile, for instance, uses mini-canisters filled with nerve agents packed into a warhead that is built to cast the canisters over a wide area, contaminating a base, a port, or an airfield. In the 1993 test a missile carrying thirty-eight canisters of water to simulate a ballistic missile armed with such a chemical warhead was annihilated by the defender missile. But some critics charge that tests like this one are in effect rigged for success. Still, the 1993 experiment does demonstrate that defensive missiles could shoot down some incoming missiles, although everyone agrees that the smallest glitch would mean failure.

Whether ballistic-missile defenses will work depends on technical specifics and geometry. American technological know-how could serve us well here. But missile defense is also a political and economic problem, one whose geographic shape is dictated by the American bases concentrated in north-eastern and southwestern Asia. But if our bases are welcome throughout Asia, why are so many countries building missiles that will make them obsolete? Missile defense has not come to grips with this fundamental problem.

For thirty years every Administration that has faced the question of national missile defense has done so



with the recognition that it will work only if the threat is somehow limited. In the late 1960s Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara originally opposed missile defense for the United States, because the Soviets could easily counter it by building more missiles, essentially exhausting the defense with cheaper offensive missiles. The Nixon Administration initially favored missile defense, but simultaneously called for arms-control negotiations, to limit the offensive. This produced the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks. Likewise, the Reagan Administration advanced its Strategic Defense Initiative along with SALT, again seeking to limit the offense. Over a thirty-year period Moscow and Washington cooperatively engaged.

But there is no cooperative engagement between the United States and Asia on missiles. Neither China nor India is involved in the latest round of START. Nor is there any plan to limit ballistic missiles made indigenously. Limits on cross-border trade in missile parts are ineffective, as experience with Iran and North Korea shows. China would never

sign an arms-control agreement that guaranteed the invulnerability of U.S. bases in Asia. Nor would many other countries. The one-sided character of such an agreement—which would permanently lock China and others into technological inferiority to America—is clear to all.

Yet without some limit on the number of missiles that China might deploy, defense becomes prohibitively expensive, because China can counter American missile defenses with cheap offsetting actions. Missiles can be made to fly faster, for example, forcing a defender to retrofit his own force in response. They can be made to spiral in a path difficult for the defender to hit, or some of them can carry decoys to distract the defender's missiles—the number of options is enormous. Counters to these countermeasures exist, but each move drives up the defender's costs much further than it does the attacker's. A faster warhead with a smaller chance of detection by radar, for example, necessitates new radars and space-tracking systems to see it.

During the Cold War, Washington and Moscow considered missile defenses in situations very different from those now facing the United States in Asia. Defenses had to protect ICBMs that were housed in superhardened concrete silos. Our forward bases in Asia, however, are called soft targets for a reason. Exposed troops, airplanes, equipment, repair stations, and ammunition and bomb stocks need a defensive shield more impermeable than anything offered by Reagan's SDI program. Rather than defending our ICBMs for a few hours, the protective bubble might be needed against repeated or even continuous salvos. Several hundred missiles—perhaps several thousand—would have to be dealt with.

Forward bases could become like the Crusaders' forts of the Middle East—heavily defended but isolated outposts with little effect beyond their immediate perimeter. The United States may see the problem in narrow terms of whether defenses will or won't work. But whether or not some missiles can be shot down, the fact that they put the United States on the technological defensive is the larger point. The superior U.S. military position has always rested on technological advantage. Now that advantage is shifting to the East.

INVENTION

Tonight the moon is a cracker,
with a bite out of it
floating in the night,

and in a week or so
according to the calendar
it will probably look

like a silver football,
and nine, maybe ten days ago
it reminded me of a thin bright claw.

But eventually—
by the end of the month,
I reckon—

it will waste away
to nothing,
nothing but stars in the sky,

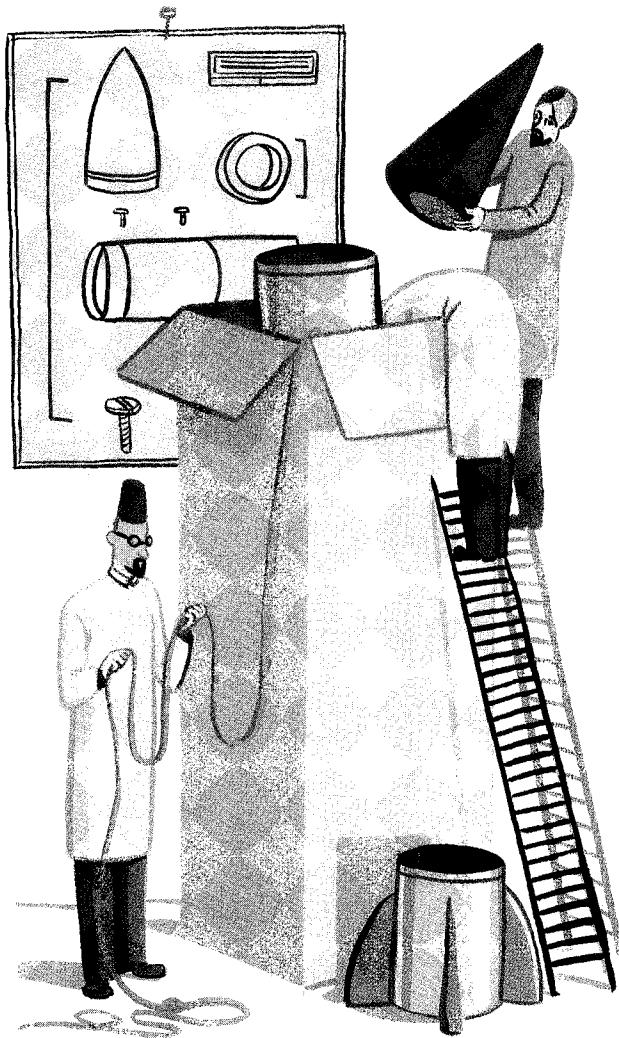
and I will have a few nights
to myself,
a little time to rest my jittery pen.

—BILLY COLLINS



Technology and the Strategy Lag

OTHER technologies are coming down the road whose strategic impacts are only barely appreciated in the United States. Strategy lags behind technology in both the United States and Asia. But the strategy will come, as it always does when technological opportunities are put together and better understood. In addition to ballistic mis-



siles, advances in cruise missiles, sea mines, and satellite reconnaissance all work against outside powers' gaining—or maintaining—a foothold in Asia.

- Cruise missiles are small, unmanned aircraftlike vehicles that fly at low, radar-evading altitudes. The most famous cruise missiles today are the U.S. Tomahawk, used repeatedly in attacks on Iraq, and the Chinese Silkworm, sold to Iran and a cause of great concern in the Persian Gulf. Cruise missiles are accurate and inexpensive, and many can be armed with nuclear, chemical, or biological warheads. They are useful for attacking ships, because their sea-skimming height makes them hard to find until the last moment. They pose a major threat to any navy, the more so when ships operate close to land or in confined waters like the Persian Gulf. For this reason the U.S. Navy is heavily invested in cruise-missile defense.

- Sea mines have gained in importance for similar reasons. Most ocean depths are too great for sea mines, but in maritime coastal areas or waters like the Persian Gulf, mines placed on the sea bottom can fire rocket-propelled charges at a passing ship. China and Russia make and sell sea mines—to Iran, among other countries. Sweeping mines is

slow and tedious, sometimes requiring teams of frogmen; the Navy often compares the process to cutting the grass on a football field with a manual lawn mower. It can be done, but it takes time.

- Satellite reconnaissance technology is improving and declining in cost. One day it may be possible to attack surface ships with ballistic missiles. First an ocean-surveillance satellite system must be able to find ships on the high seas, and ballistic missiles must be able to home in on them. No country now possesses these technologies.

The combined effect of these technologies will be to change Asia's military geography as fundamentally as it changed when the airplane made the overseas colonial empire obsolete. Whether it takes five years or fifteen is irrelevant. Military access to Asia will be far more difficult in the future than it has been in the past. This anti-access trend affects the United States more than any other country, because of America's self-image as the world's sole superpower.

T *Adapting, Not Shaping*

THE United States is far ahead of China and other countries in tanks, jet planes, and guided missiles. Our weapons are still more impressive in any side-by-side comparison. But these are the wrong comparisons to make. Staying in Asia is not a game about who has better weapons; it is a contest of missiles against bases.

Missile development today falls below the threshold of grand strategy to that of technical and bureaucratic opportunism by the weapon-making parts of industry and the armed forces. The narrow focus is on fielding a new missile, or building a better sea mine. So far there is no strategy to pull these activities together in such a way as to drive the United States out of the Far East. But a major U.S. deployment of missile defenses could be the catalyst for just such a strategy. Such defenses could be a focal point for missile development throughout Asia. Then the costs and the hazards of remaining a power in Asia would sharply increase.

If existing attitudes prevail, the United States may perceive as a threat what is nothing more than the business-as-usual evolution of Asian militaries. Washington is being drawn into a game it does not understand, in which East Asian nations are using technology and diplomacy to shape our presence in this region.

The real challenge is to America's self-conception as the global architect that shapes international security. The long era in which Asia was penetrated by outside powers from its rim is coming to a close, and the problem is not how to shape what is happening there but how to adapt to it. ☼

Today Is Sunday

by PETER HO DAVIES

“Promise me,”
my father says, “if I ever
get like this, you’ll do me in.
Knock me on the head
or something”

ON Sunday I visit my father, the first time since Christmas, and he tells me my timing’s bad. He’s off to visit his mother in the hospital.

My grandmother’s senile, eighty-eight, hasn’t recognized anyone for donkey’s years, but he still drives the thirty miles to the hospital once or twice a week. He slipped a disc last winter climbing a ladder, and he has a pinched nerve in his back that can double him over. It’s bothering him now as he looks for his shoes. He clutches his side with one hand and winces, but when I ask him if he’s okay, he says it’s nothing.

“It doesn’t look like nothing.”

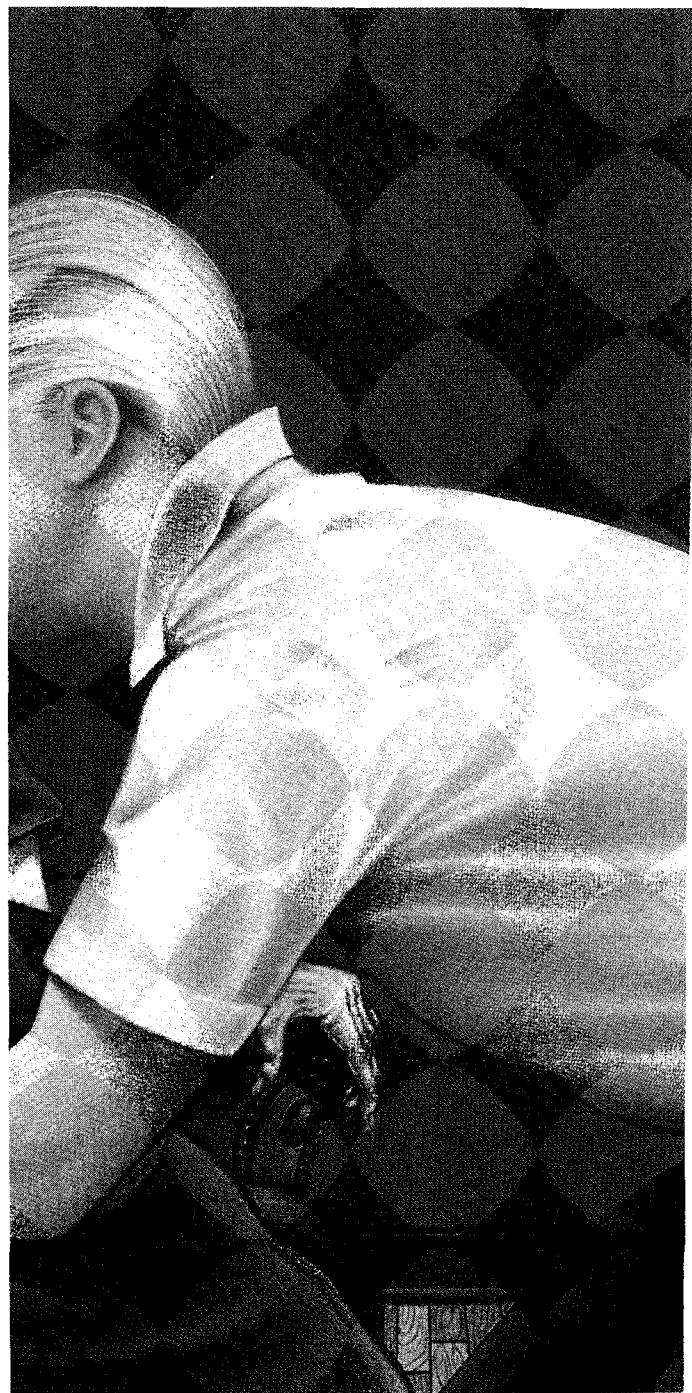
“Old age,” he says, like it’s a war wound, and gives a little groan.

“Oh, great.”

I try telling him it’s pouring out and the forecast is for sleet. I ask him to give it a miss this week. I’ll make lunch (he pulls a face). There’s soccer on the telly. But this is a mistake. He won’t put himself first. The old lady, I tell him at last, won’t even notice, and he looks at me like I’m a stranger.

“I was just thinking of you,” I say quickly. “Christ. Am I not allowed to care?”

He pinches the creases of his trouser legs and tugs them up an inch as he sits to put on his shoes.



“There’s a difference between caring,” he says, pulling his laces tight, “and carrying on.”

I stand over him for a moment. His hair, what’s left of it, is salt-and-peppery, but when he straightens up I see that his stubble is coming in pure white.

“At least let me drive you,” I say, and he tells me, “Suit yourself.”

I make him sit in the back so he can stretch out a bit, and he asks if I’m his bloody chauffeur now. The idea tickles him. He calls me “James.” Puts on the posh voice. Gives me a wave like the Queen Mum when I ask him if he’s comfy. The whole bit. In the mirror I watch him light a cigarette.



He's supposed to have given up. Doctor's orders. Ages ago. I haven't seen him smoke in maybe ten years. He catches me watching him and makes a face.

"Don't mind, do you?" he says, and I tell him, "Oh, no. Course not. Be my guest."

"Champion. Only I remember when you was a lad," he says, taunting now. "You used to make a big song and dance about me smoking. You thought your old dad'd drop dead any second."

"I was a kid," I say. I watch him in the mirror as he takes another drag. He puts his fingers to his lips, palm in, and removes the cigarette. It's a gesture I haven't seen since childhood.

"Asked you once what you wanted for Christmas, and you said for me to give up. Proper whiner, you were."

"Crack the window, would you?" I say. "It was for your own good."

He taps his ash on the window frame and shakes his head. "Selfish," he says. "Spoiled."

"Did Mum know?" My mother died three years ago.

"Like hell."

"So what'd you do? Drive out here each week and have a smoke?"

"I think I deserve it," he says.

The car thuds over the compression plates of a bridge.

At a traffic light I turn to him and say, "Give us one, then."
He doesn't know I smoke. Have since school. I think of us before I left home, both sneaking cigarettes under my mother's nose. No wonder we never tumbled to each other.

"So that's how it is," he says bleakly. "Monkey see, monkey bleeding do."

I hold out my hand, but he just looks at it until the lights change.

"Drive on."

He blows smoke through his nostrils and smiles, and for a moment he looks young again, the spitting image of the fellow in our old photo albums.

I think of an afternoon in our back garden when I was little. A birthday party perhaps, summer, a bunch of kids, my mother, my gran. He had this trick of keeping a soccer ball in the air longer than anyone else. He'd just stand there on one foot, his thin hips swaying slightly, swinging his leg lazily, back and forth like a pendulum, the ball popping up off his toes. I was dead proud of him. He looked like he could go on forever. Still, the act got boring after a bit. I wanted a turn—even more, I wanted him to teach me—but he just kept going as if he were setting some record. In the end my grandmother called, "Give Paul a go, then," but he shook his head. He reached into his pocket and pulled out a packet of fags, drew one out, and lit it—all without losing control. He puffed away contentedly, grinning around the cig, eyes half closed against the smoke, until all of us were staring at the curving, trembling tip of ash.

CREPE MYRTLES

When the heaviness of dog days
has had its way
with us, they bloom
to stay the doom

of summer's end. Such Popsicles,
these crepe myrtles,
to cool the day's
parched tongue! And where's

the truck that brought them? The little
bell? Clang goes the
ghostly driver
and then is gone.

—CATHY SMITH BOWERS

I HAVEN'T been to the hospital for three years. It's a sprawling Victorian setup, half closed now that a new hospital has opened in town. The main building, with its crenellated clock tower, is perched on a hill overlooking landscaped gardens and rolling fields. The lawns are neat, but the flower beds are empty mounds of earth. When I was still living at home, before college, this is where my father taught me to drive. The quiet roads were good for practicing maneuvers—parallel parking, emergency stops—but we still ended up in a shouting match every time I ground the gears or clipped the curb. He was always whining that I took the speed bumps—"sleeping policemen," he called them—too fast. I creep over them now.

The door to my grandmother's ward has two handles, one in the usual place and the other about a foot from the top. My father grasps both and turns them together.

Inside, we find her in a corner of the lounge, so shrunken and slumped that I hardly recognize her. Her head lolls back against her chair, too heavy for her creased, deflated neck, and she peers at us damply from hooded eyes. We pull up chairs, and my father takes her hand. He talks to her, just nonsense really, the noises you'd make to a baby, and while he talks, he rubs her hand. When she drools a little, he wipes her face with his handkerchief. He tweaks her nose when he's done, and the old lady smiles vaguely. I look at her other hand where it lies in her lap, but I don't take it.

I wish he wouldn't treat her like a child.

"Here," my father says to her. "How about a banana?" He pulls one, like magic, out of his pocket. It looks strange in the ward, bright and exotic, and I remember his telling me once that they had bananas only for Christmas when he was a boy. He peels it carefully and offers it to her, but her eyes are unfocused. My father touches it to her lips, and when her mouth stays closed, he rubs the tip of it back and forth—I want to tell him to leave her be—until she opens wide. Her lips close on it, sucking, and he twists it gently to break off a piece in her mouth. Slowly, absently, she begins chewing, and I look away.

By the door is a white board where the nurses write messages. "Today is Sunday, March 10," it reads. "It is a cold, wet day."

"Promise me," my father says, "if I ever get like this, you'll do me in. Knock me on the head or something."

He looks at me as if it's a dare, and I stare back at him.

"Oh, right," I tell him. "No bother." And then, "Do you ever wonder how it makes me feel, your asking that?"

"You'll thank me," he says with sudden heat. "You don't believe me? Listen." He lowers his voice. "I wish my mother would die. D'you hear me? I wish my own mother would die. How d'you think that makes me feel?"

He turns back to her, and I watch him stroke her cheek. He calls her "pet," and she bends her head to his touch.

"Oh, stop looking so worried," he tells me, glancing over.

"I'll be gone long before that. My old fella had a heart attack before he was fifty-five."

I called my father on his birthday last year and asked him how old he was, and he told me: "Sixty." For a second I thought he was pulling my leg.

My grandmother has fallen asleep. Her head rolls, her mouth falls open, and a ball of chewed banana drops into her collar. My father picks it up daintily in his handkerchief, sees me watching, and pretends to toss it my way. I flinch but don't smile.

"Why do you carry on, then?" I ask him. "Keep coming all these years?"

"Because." He shrugs and then, to her, he starts to sing very quietly from *The Wizard of Oz*. "Becoz, becoz, becoz, becoz, be-coz. What else can I do?"

When he decided she couldn't get on by herself anymore, she came and lived with us for a few months, but she would forget where she was, get angry, storm out, get lost. He thought she'd walk through plate glass, burn the house down, get hit by a car. ("All the things I used to worry about happening to you when you were a youngster," he told me once.) When he first moved her here, he wouldn't let my mother or me visit for a couple of weeks.

Now, getting up stiffly, he says, "I just want a word with the nurses before we're off. Keep an eye on her, eh?" I make as if to tip my chauffeur's cap, but I feel uneasy alone with her.

I remember a visit, eight years ago maybe, when I was still learning to drive. He told me to wait outside in the car, the old Cortina, while he said good-bye. I watched him in the rearview mirror as he came out to the car. I remember seeing him struggling with the handles on the door and hurrying across the parking lot. When he got in, he told me to get going. I still had to think about everything then: starting the engine, giving it gas, putting the car in first, balancing the clutch. When I was ready, I checked the mirror. There wasn't another car in sight, but I wanted to make all this second nature before the test. In the mirror I saw my grandmother at the window of the ward. I thought for a second she was waving, and then I saw her hand turn white as it struck the glass.

"Come on," my father said tersely. "Stop messing about."

I signaled, revved the engine, lifted the clutch, and stalled the car. The hand brake was still set.

"Christ!"

I went through it all again: put the car back in neutral, turned the ignition. This time I didn't look in the mirror and remembered to release the brake, but the car still jerked, roaring, out of the car park. "Of all the half-arsed—" My father pulled on the hand brake with a tearing sound and shoved me out so that he could take over.

When I look up now, my grandmother is staring at me. She's breathing hoarsely, making sounds deep in her throat. I'm about to get a nurse when she says, "Don?" My father's name.

"He'll be right back, Gran," I tell her, raising my voice a little. I look away in the direction he's gone, but I don't see him, and when I look back, she's still staring at me.

"Don?" she says again. "Donald?" and at last I take her hand and tell her, "Yeah." She falls asleep like that, her hand in mine. The skin is loose on her bones, wrinkled and liver-spotted, but disconcertingly soft.

When my father comes back, he asks me if I'm ready, and then he sees me holding her hand and says we can stay for a while, so we do. We're silent, both a little embarrassed. She doesn't wake again, but we watch her chest rising and falling until we take our own breaths in time.

"Was she all right while I was gone?" he asks at last, and I nod. I don't know how to tell him what happened. Not without risking some clumsy hurt. The lie makes me feel as if I've cheated him, as if I owe him something, but at the same time I feel sharply protective. I'm going to have to keep this secret, carry it until he dies. The idea of outliving my father suddenly makes me feel old.

LATER, in the car, he says, "I didn't mean it before." I look over at him.

"About putting me out of my misery and that."

"I hope not."

He reaches into his pocket for cigarettes.

"Would you pack that in if I asked you?" I say.

"Nah." He rattles his box of matches.

"I couldn't have done it anyway."

He grins. "Think I'd have asked you otherwise?"

He lights up, and in the dusk his face flares briefly. I think of the long nights as a kid when I was afraid to go to sleep in the dark, when he'd sit with me after he turned the lamp out, smoking so I'd know he was still there, his cigarette glowing. We had a joke, something we'd seen on TV or read in a comic. When he turned the light off, he'd put on a stern voice, strike a match below his chin, and intone, "The face of tomorrow, *today!*"

I see a pub on the way back and pull in.

"Want a bevy?" I ask, and he says, "Yeah, all right."

Inside, I ask him what he wants, and he says, "Pint of bitter." And then, "And a scotch, eh? Since you're driving."

When I bring the drinks to the table, he's fishing his cigarettes out.

"You want?" he says, holding the pack out. One is extended.

"All right, then."

I watch him dip his head to light his, the gesture so familiar, and then he holds out his cupped hands, and I bend my face to take the flame.

"Your health," he says, lifting his glass.

Afterward he settles himself in the back seat and tells me, "Home, James." ☼



Mahler's Unfinished Symphony

Now that several versions of Mahler's Tenth have been recorded, listeners have a variety of ways to appreciate its greatness

SOON after Gustav Mahler died, on May 18, 1911, at the age of fifty, it became known that he had been working on a new symphony at the time of his death. It was clear that he had been unable to complete the work, but there were conflicting reports as to the state in which he had left it, and therefore as to whether it might someday be performed.

In a 1912 lecture Arnold Schoenberg, who was inclined toward numerology, alluded to the fact that neither Beethoven nor Bruckner had been able to get beyond a ninth symphony: "It seems that the Ninth is a limit. He who wants to go beyond it must pass away. It seems as if something might be imparted to us in the Tenth, for which we are not ready." Less mystically but just as pessimisti-

cally, Richard Specht, in his 1913 critical biography of Mahler, wrote, "It may be regarded as completely impossible that out of his mute symbols someone else—no matter how intimately acquainted with Mahler's spirit and essence—should fashion the full score." Yet where Schoenberg had spoken merely of "sketches," Specht referred to "an eleventh symphonic creation [he counted *Das Lied von der Erde* in with Mahler's nine numbered symphonies] drafted and completely written down in the short score"—that is, on several staves, with suggestions for orchestration.

In the years following the First World War, Mahler's reputation steadily rose, especially among younger composers like Schoenberg and his pupils Alban Berg and Anton Webern. In 1920, to cel-

ebate what would have been Mahler's sixtieth birthday, Willem Mengelberg and the Concertgebouw Orchestra, which Mahler had conducted on occasion, staged a Mahler festival in Amsterdam. A few years later Mahler's widow, Alma, decided that the world was ready to learn at least a little about her husband's last symphony.

Mahler had all but completed the scoring of the first movement, and so in 1924 Alma asked her son-in-law, the young composer Ernst Křenek, to touch up the first movement and to score the very brief third movement, which Mahler had titled "Purgatorio." These two movements were performed that October in Vienna under the direction of Franz Schalk, who may also have had a hand in the scoring. That same year Alma published a facsimile edition of Mahler's sketches for the Tenth Symphony. In her preface she wrote, "If at first I held it as my cherished right to preserve the treasure of the Tenth Symphony in secret, so I now know it to be my duty to disclose to the world the last thoughts of the Master."

The performances of the two non-consecutive movements naturally gave little idea of what the symphony as a whole might be like. Moreover, the facsimile, although beautifully produced, was woefully incomplete, and most people who examined it thought it confirmed Specht's view that the work was unreconstructible.

Specht himself, however, in the 1925 edition of his biography, recanted that view. Moreover, he castigated what he termed the puritanism and false piety of those who said that performing the Tenth would dishonor Mahler's memory. Now that he had thoroughly analyzed the sketches, Specht wrote, he had concluded that although the three movements not performed by Schalk "obviously require filling out, in the counterthemes and inner voices, by a musician of high standing devoted to Mahler and intimate with his style," such a man "would surely find the right path to the goal." Specht suggested Schoenberg.

During the 1940s Alma Mahler and

Gustav Mahler, 1898

Images accompanying this article are from Centre de documentation musicale/BMG

Jack Diether, of the New York Mahler Society, did appeal to Schoenberg, and also to Shostakovich. Both men, occupied with their own creative work, declined to take on the task.

IT was at about this time, in the mid-1940s, when I was in high school, that I became interested in Mahler. He was then still something of a cult taste in this country, and only a few of his major works had been recorded. One of the few friends who shared my love for his music was an older fellow named Clinton Carpenter, who worked at the Chicago music store where I bought my scores. In time Carpenter, a dedicated amateur, revealed to me that he was going to complete and orchestrate Mahler's Tenth Symphony. I had little idea what this might involve, but I still recall the neat timetable, taped to the glass door of his bookcase, that indicated exactly how long he planned to work on each movement.

I thought no more about the Tenth until around 1970, when someone gave me a copy of Pierre Boulez's superb recording of the first movement. A few years after that, driving home one night from dinner at a friend's house, I heard on my car radio what was obviously a Mahler symphony—and a very fine one—but not one of the canonical nine. It turned out to be the first recording of the entire Tenth Symphony, by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra, from an early draft of the "performing version" prepared by the English musicologist Deryck Cooke.

Clint Carpenter, I soon learned, had not been the only one interested in completing the Tenth. He had begun work in 1946, and was followed a few years later by an English composer named Joe Wheeler and a German, Hans Wollschläger. Cooke did not start work until 1959, but his first draft was almost finished a year later. That year, in a BBC broadcast in honor of Mahler's centenary, Berthold Goldschmidt, a composer and conductor who had been helping Cooke, led the Philharmonia Orchestra in sections of Cooke's score; Cooke gave a brief talk on the work. Soon afterward Alma Mahler, who had earlier approved Cooke's efforts, decided that she did not want the Tenth Symphony completed and performed after all. She

issued a ban on all future performances. It seemed that Cooke's work, along with that of Carpenter and the others, had been in vain.

But in 1963, the year before her death, Alma listened to a tape of the BBC broadcast, was much moved by it, and changed her mind again. "I have now decided once and for all," she wrote Cooke, "to give you full permission to go ahead with performances in any part of the world." On August 13, 1964, the BBC aired the first complete performance of the first draft of Cooke's score, with Goldschmidt conducting the London Symphony Orchestra. A year later Ormandy recorded it.

Wollschläger eventually abandoned his score, but Carpenter and Wheeler completed theirs, in the mid-1960s. They had little success getting them played. Cooke had got there first—and with Alma's blessing. Moreover, many people were firmly opposed to any performances of the entire Tenth Symphony, as distinguished from the first movement, on the ground that Mahler himself had not completed the work; to present it as his was to do his memory an injustice and so to commit an immoral act. It was perfectly understandable that an older man such as the great conductor Bruno Walter, who had assisted Mahler at Hamburg and Vienna and had conducted the first performances of *Das Lied von der Erde* and the Ninth Symphony, should take such a position. But coming from younger conductors, who had had no personal connection with Mahler, this seemed more of Specht's "false piety."

Another objection, made by conductors of all ages, was that the Cooke score at some points simply did not sound like Mahler. In the preface to his score Cooke had explained that it was "in no sense intended as a 'completion' or 'reconstruction' of the work." Mahler, one of the most fastidious and painstaking composers in the history of Western music, would surely have made many revisions and additions that only he could have imagined. "The idea that someone else can now reconstruct this process," Cooke wrote, "is pure illusion." All that Cooke sought to do was to "represent the stage the work had reached when Mahler died, in a practical performing version."

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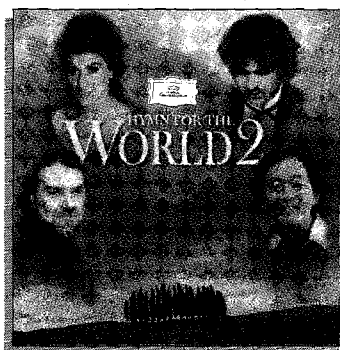
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Thus it makes perfect sense that the absence of the contrapuntal writing that Mahler alone could have provided—those “counter-themes and inner voices” mentioned by Specht—might leave the Cooke score sounding too simple and bare to be genuine Mahler. The excellent Mahler conductor Michael Tilson Thomas once told me that he found Cooke’s score “very empty-sounding.” “There are so many places,” he said, “where I just think, ‘This is an outline, this is just an outline,’ because none of the complex inner workings of the countersubjects and whatnot are present.”

Lacking the ears and the training of a conductor, I hear no emptiness in the Cooke score. Anyhow, Mahler’s textures in his earlier, completed works are often quite bare. More important, the sheer power and beauty of the music, as captured in Cooke’s performing version, easily overwhelm whatever force these objections may possess. It is no wonder that over the past twenty years an increasing number of conductors have found Cooke’s score very much worth performing and recording. As Cooke remarks in his preface, “The thematic line throughout, and something like 90% of the counterpoint and harmony, are pure Mahler, and vintage Mahler at that.” Then again, if a conductor finds something lacking in Cooke’s score, he is always free to add in performance what seems to be missing—as several conductors have in fact done.

THE Tenth Symphony is the most perfectly and satisfyingly formed of all Mahler’s major works. At either end stands a vast and complex movement twenty to twenty-four minutes in length, depending on the conductor. Next in from each end is a Scherzo, twelve to fourteen minutes in length. At the center sits the marvelous, enigmatic little “Purgatorio,” which lasts barely four minutes. Resting complacently at the center of Mahler’s long and often turbulent work, it reminds one of the secret in Robert Frost’s two-line poem, “The Secret Sits”:

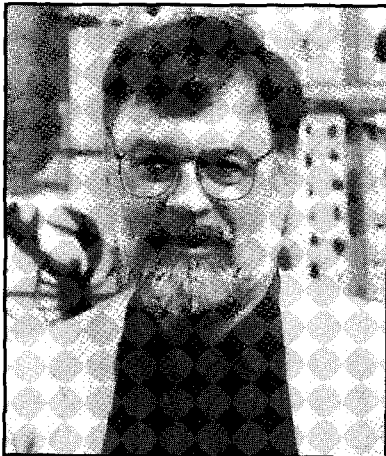
We dance round in a ring and
suppose,
But the Secret sits in the middle
and knows.

Though the music of the longer movements is sometimes anguished, the Tenth Symphony is by no means as dark a work as either *Das Lied von der Erde* or the Ninth. Pliant, consoling dance rhythms keep breaking in upon the high drama of the first movement, reasserting the presence of the everyday world. The movement ends calmly and quietly. The two Scherzos are energetic, insistent, even at times menacing, but each one has two gracious, seductive trio sections. The magnificent finale begins very dramatically, with a slow introduction punctuated by repeated strokes on a muffled drum—Mahler’s memory of a heroic fireman’s funeral procession that he and Alma watched from their New York hotel window in February of 1908. But the music gradually turns warm and serene. A vigorous Allegro follows, in which the battles of the other movements are fought once again: motifs from the “Purgatorio” recur in phrases that recall the first Scherzo, and the introduction to the first movement, there heard softly in the violas, is blared forth by the horns. But the earlier serenity gradually returns, and a three-note motif from the “Purgatorio” is transformed into what sounds like a remembered snatch of a touching folk song or lullaby. This gradually fragments and then—after one brief, ecstatic outburst—dies away, giving the ending a wry and gentle benedictory air.

It was this ending, so different from the deep sadness with which both *Das Lied von der Erde* and the Ninth Symphony end, that first attracted critical attention to the Tenth. In a 1962 essay, “The Facts Concerning Mahler’s Tenth Symphony,” Cooke spoke of the work’s structure as presenting “an emotional and psychological statement as intelligible as those of Mahler’s other symphonies”; he took “the ‘message’ of the symphony” to be “the final resolution of Mahler’s lifelong spiritual conflict.” In 1974, in his excellent little book on Mahler in the Master Musicians series, Michael Kennedy went further. He spoke of Cooke as having “completely altered the emotional interpretation of Mahler’s last year” and as having demonstrated “that it is wrong to regard Mahler as having died in a mood of valediction, defeated or resigned to the inevitable.” In contrast to *Das Lied*

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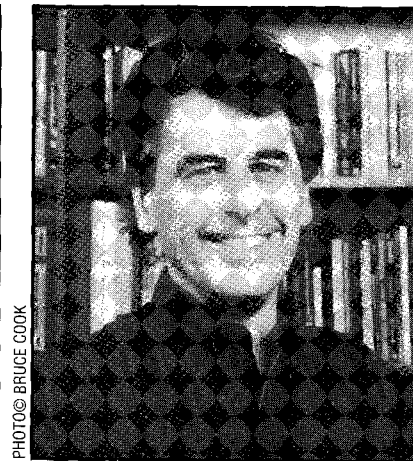
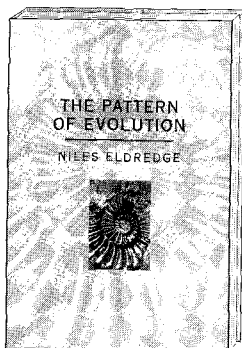
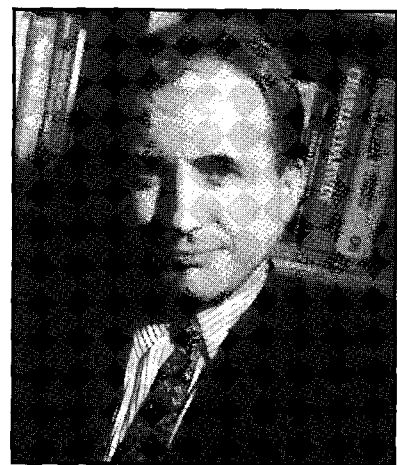
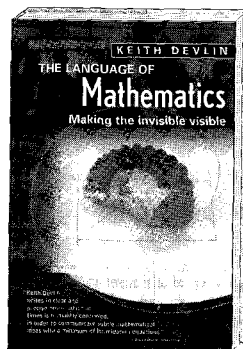


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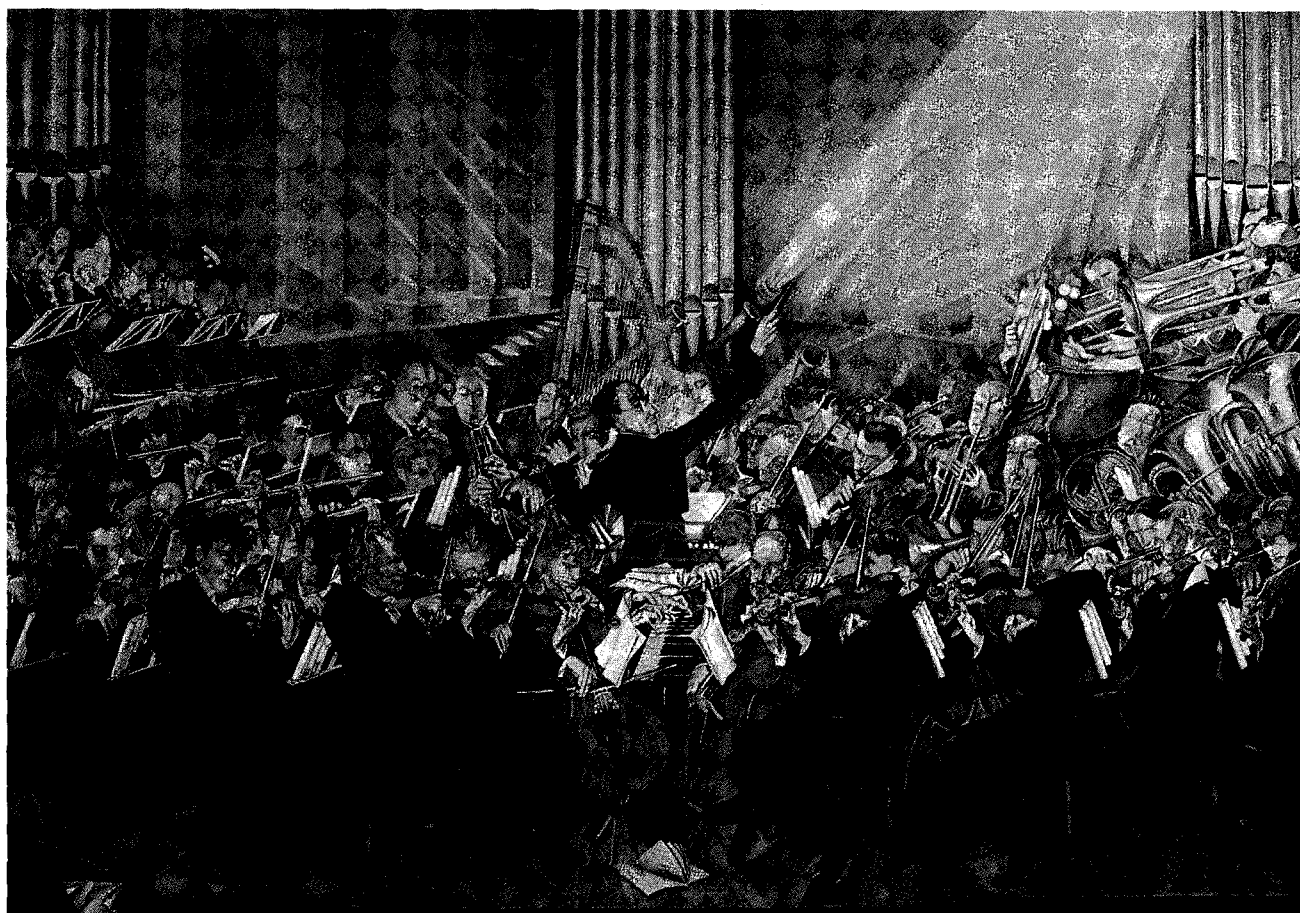
von der Erde and the Ninth Symphony, the Tenth “transcends thoughts of death and ends with a gloriously affirmatory and positive assertion of man’s spiritual victory.”

This seems to me to go too far: we have left the realm of music criticism and entered that of soap opera. It is perfectly appropriate to think of the ending of a symphony as exerting a special force in shaping our interpretation of the whole work, and hence to regard symphonies, especially perhaps Romantic symphonies, as having a sort of

deserves. For it has been transmitted to us not through Mahler’s works but rather through Alma’s memoirs. As even Kennedy argues, this image never did stand up well against the evidence of Mahler’s letters, of other people’s memories of him, or of his busy and highly successful conducting career. Its invalidation does not require the discovery (or invention) of anything so high-toned as an assertion of man’s spiritual victory.

Despite their endings, *Das Lied von der Erde* and the Ninth no more support that image than the Tenth invalidates it.

words have been assumed to justify the popular view of him as an essentially confessional artist—the representative composer of our troubled century, the supreme purveyor of musical angst. Every apparently cheerful Scherzo must be heard as eerily grotesque, with Hitler’s jackbooted troops and the Holocaust lurking just around the next bend. The most beautiful slow movements are revealed as laden with pathos and bleak resignation. The gayest and most festive finales, closely inspected, show us that Mahler was merely whistling in the



rough narrative form. But it seems wrong to string together a composer’s symphonies—even the symphonies of so autobiographical a composer as Mahler—to form a larger narrative that is then assumed to be a blow-by-blow account of his emotional life.

It is surely right to say that the serene and consolatory ending of the Tenth is different from the endings of Mahler’s two other late symphonic works. But to say that the Tenth thereby invalidates the popular image of Mahler as an egocentric, death-obsessed neurotic is to accord that image more attention than it

Like the Tenth, and like Mahler’s other mature symphonies, they are far too varied in emotional content to admit of so simple an interpretation. In 1907, on a visit to Finland, Mahler had a discussion with Sibelius on the nature of the symphony, in the course of which he told Sibelius, “The symphony must be like the world. It must embrace everything.” Nowadays these famous words are cited to show that Mahler wanted to open the symphony to all the highly personal, disturbing, lurid emotions supposedly eschewed by classicists such as Brahms and Sibelius. Mahler’s

dark. It has been easy to forget that only one Mahler symphony, the Sixth, actually ends in the minor.

To interpret Mahler’s analogy between a symphony and a world in this way is to miss its point. Of course there is a good deal of anguish and angst in his music; but there is a great deal else, too. He developed his analogy in conversations with his friends, particularly the violinist Natalie Bauer-Lechner, at far great-

The Symphony (1923), by Max Oppenheimer: Mahler conducting the Vienna Philharmonic

er length than he evidently did with Sibelius. From his various remarks it is clear that for him a symphony needed to be all-inclusive—to bind together through strictly musical means (primarily the development and linking of motifs) the most emotionally disparate materials imaginable, creating a self-contained world different from the world of any other symphony. Mahler did not, I think, intend each (or any) symphony to make a particular statement or convey a particular message in the sense that Cooke implied. The analogy stipulates that each work, taken on its own terms, will be far too emotionally wide-ranging to yield any such single statement or message. Much less did Mahler intend his successive symphonies to form a spiritual autobiography, even though they contain many incidental effects—the muffled drum in the Tenth, for example—of autobiographical origin. The respective worlds of the various symphonies are far too different from one another for the works to form a continuous narrative.

The predictable result of this misinterpretation of Mahler's intentions has been the view, common among music critics, that any performance of a Mahler symphony that fails to find bleakness, desolation, neurosis, and even hysteria in virtually every bar is to be dismissed as cold, pedantic, uninvolved. This goes dead against the all-inclusiveness that Mahler so consciously sought and, in his best works, achieved. The finest of our present-day Mahler conductors—Boulez, Claudio Abbado, Bernard Haitink—do not impose a one-size-fits-all interpretation on his symphonies. Rather, they take each movement as they find it, bringing out the extreme contrasts among and within movements to give the works their emotional breadth and depth. It is to be regretted that so far none of these three has recorded the entire Tenth Symphony.

YET there are excellent recordings available. The two best are Kurt Sanderling's 1979 performance with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra (Ars Vivendi 2100225) and Simon Rattle's 1980 performance with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (EMI CDC 54006). James Levine's recording with the Philadelphia Orchestra (RCA RCD2-4553),

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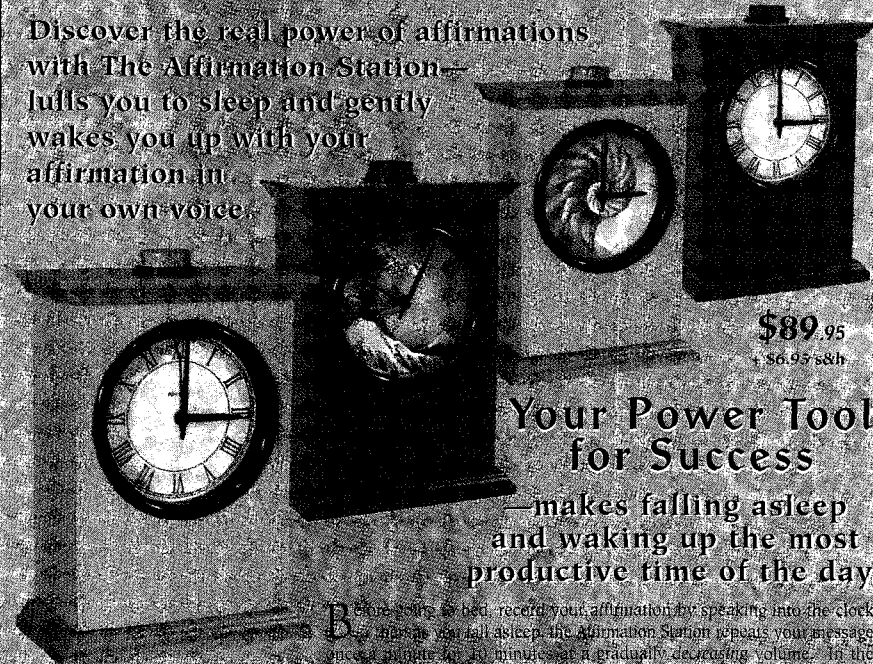
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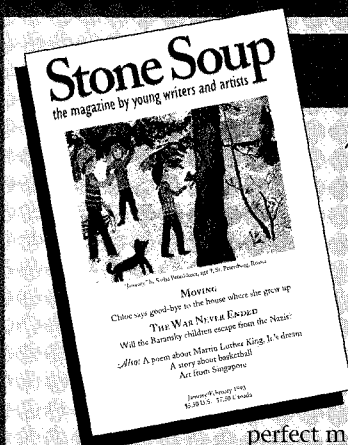
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made in 1978 (the first movement) and 1980 (the other movements), is also very fine, but has one drawback: Levine, apparently convinced that the Tenth Symphony ends tragically, takes the finale almost intolerably slowly.

The two earlier recordings, Ormandy's of 1965 and Wyn Morris's of 1972 with the New Philharmonia Orchestra, which was the first recording to use the final draft of Cooke's score, are not in print and not worth looking for. Two later performances, by Riccardo Chailly and the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra (London 421 182-2) and by Elihu Inbal and the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra (Denon CO-75129), from 1986 and 1992 respectively, are commendable but not the equal of Sanderling's, Rattle's, or Levine's.

All these recordings are of Cooke's score. In the past couple of years we have finally been given the opportunity to hear the Carpenter version, which has been recorded by Harold Farberman and the Philharmonia Hungarica (Golden String International GSCD 024A). Unlike Cooke, Carpenter decided that some free composition of inner voices was required if the Tenth, as it stood in Mahler's short score, was to be made to sound like a genuine Mahler symphony. To anyone who has listened for twenty years to Cooke's score, Carpenter's at first sounds very cluttered. Yet the more one listens, the more it sounds like a credible alternative. If we are really to judge Carpenter's work fairly, however, we need a better performance than Farberman's. All the movements except the "Purgatorio" sound as though they are being taken too fast, and this turns out to be the case: the performance instructions that circulate with rental copies of Carpenter's score give timings for the five movements that add up to fourteen minutes more than the total time of Farberman's performance.

Equally interesting is the performing version by Remo Mazzetti Jr., completed in 1986, which has been given an excellent performance by Leonard Slatkin and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra (RCA 09026-68190-2). Mazzetti, who first got interested in the Tenth in the mid-1970s, helped Carpenter to prepare his score for its New York premiere, in 1983. He soon came to feel that whereas Cooke had not added

enough to Mahler's short score, Carpenter had added too much. So Mazzetti prepared a version that adds more than Cooke but less than Carpenter. On first hearing, Mazzetti's scoring seems over-elaborate, though very elegant. But after so many years of Cooke any other score is bound to sound a little wrong at first.

Joe Wheeler's version has never been commercially recorded, though private tape recordings are known to exist. The score is, however, available for inspection, and a cursory reading reveals that Wheeler has added even less than Cooke, producing a score that looks very bare and simple.

Plainly, what is needed is for all four versions to be given adequate recordings, so that they may become familiar not only to ordinary listeners but also to conductors who might be interested in performing the Tenth. Slatkin has helped this process along by including a disc on which he makes several comparisons among the versions, with musical illustrations provided by his orchestra. Once all the versions have become well known, conductors can either choose one or prepare their own mix-and-match versions. This last may seem a wild suggestion, but the late Georg Solti, in his recently published *Memoirs*, wrote that he was planning to do just that. After remarking that he had not performed Cooke's score because "I think it lacks the contrapuntal element in Mahler's writing," Solti continued, "Three further versions of the Tenth Symphony exist or are in preparation, and in the summer of 1999 I would like to work on a solution to the symphony, putting together the different reconstructions and adding points of my own."

One's sadness that Solti did not live to carry out this plan is tempered by a sense that if such a suggestion could come from so firmly established a conductor, then Mahler's Tenth is at last ready to assume its rightful place in the permanent repertory. When it does—when, that is, it ceases to be treated as an affront to Mahler's memory, or as an incomplete and thus necessarily flawed work, or as welcome proof that at the end of his life Mahler came to have faith in man's ultimate spiritual victory—then perhaps it will be recognized for what it is: the greatest work its composer has left us. ☪

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The success of U.S. policy in El Salvador—preventing a guerrilla victory—was based on 40,000 political murders

by Benjamin Schwarz

OUR OWN BACKYARD:

**The United States
in Central America,
1977–1992**

by William M. LeoGrande.
University of North Carolina,
790 pages, \$39.95.

READING William LeoGrande's *Our Own Backyard* is a distasteful experience. The book is difficult to stomach precisely because it is such a masterly and comprehensive chronicle of U.S. policy toward Central America in the 1980s. That policy, as LeoGrande writes, "occasioned the most bitter domestic political debate since Vietnam," and to read this book is to be reminded of a host of unpleasant and rancorous subjects that one would prefer to forget. Nearly all sides in that debate emerge from LeoGrande's account as hypocritical, and at least some participants emerge as apologists for murder. *Our Own Backyard* makes the reader squirm as it dredges up memories of dishonest arguments concerning the unsavory friends with whom the United States allied itself and the equally nasty enemies against whom it fought by proxy in El Salvador and Nicaragua.

LeoGrande, a professor of government at American University and a former congressional-committee staff member, divides his extraordinarily clear account of American policy into two lengthy main sections, one on El Salvador and the other on Nicaragua. His section on El Salvador is the more interesting and

valuable, and the focus of this review, because LeoGrande's is the only comprehensive record of the subject. His chronicle of Nicaraguan policy can't compete in thoroughness with Robert Kagan's 900-page *A Twilight Struggle: American Power and Nicaragua, 1977–1990*, published two years ago, and furthermore, the most complicated and controversial aspects of that policy have been and will continue to be assessed in works on the Reagan presidency generally and the Iran-contra scandal specifically. In contrast, America's involvement in El Salvador's civil war has not until now been

yard, which is based on interviews with many of the key policymakers and on the relatively small number of government papers that have been declassified, his scrupulousness as a historian overtakes his biases, allowing the reader to assess with clarity the policies and debates concerning the U.S. role in El Salvador's civil war. Until scholars are granted access to the hundreds of thousands of pages of still-classified documents, LeoGrande's will probably remain the definitive account of America's part in that murderous conflict.

Few subjects in America's recent foreign policy are richer, as morally unsettling, and better deserving of a chronicler. El Salvador was the site of America's most prolonged and expensive military endeavor in the period between the Vietnam War and the Persian Gulf conflict. More important, whereas America's strategy in Nicaragua was rather straightforward—arm and train a guerrilla force and in other ways subvert the economy and regime—U.S. policy in El Salvador demanded nothing less than that America effect fundamental changes in

that country's authoritarian culture, its political practices, and its economic, social, and military structure.

Such a project used to be called, presumptuously, "nation-building." With the exception of its involvement in South Vietnam, America had never been so deeply and intimately involved in attempting to transform a foreign society that it had not defeated in war and hence did not control. In postwar West Germany the United States inculcated democracy, but it had first destroyed



treated as history. To be sure, in the 1980s a number of books took a journalistic or overtly political approach to the subject, but as the very title of the best of these—*Weakness and Deceit*, by Raymond Bonner—illustrates, these polemics were designed to generate more heat than light and don't serve dispassionate reassessment.

Not that LeoGrande doesn't have a point of view (he was and remains a strenuous critic of the Reagan Administration's policies), but in *Our Own Back-*

Germany's demons. In El Salvador the United States sought to transform the country while allied with the devil it had to subdue. Whether the geopolitical stakes demanded that involvement and whether letting events take their own course would have resulted in even more atrocities can be debated. What is indisputable is that for a decade American policymakers in Washington and American civilian and military personnel in El Salvador consorted with murderers and sadists.

As LeoGrande's account—if not always his assessment—makes clear, this pact with the devil was made not by the Administration of the aggressively anti-Communist Republican Ronald Reagan but by that of the moderate Democrat Jimmy Carter—ironically, a President deeply committed to emphasizing human rights in his foreign policy. Simply put, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and with Cuban and Soviet influence apparently growing throughout the Third World generally and in Nicaragua specifically, the Carter Administration believed that global containment required the United States to forestall a revolution in El Salvador led by the Farabundo Martí Front for National Liberation (FMLN), a loose alliance of Marxist guerrilla groups tied to Cuba and the Sandinistas of Nicaragua.

El Salvador was ripe for revolution. Its society, in which a small landed elite dominated an exploited peasant labor force, was grossly inequitable even by Latin American standards. That elite ruled the country in partnership with its guardian, the military, which had a long tradition of bloody repression of dissenters and revolutionaries, whom it tended to view as one and the same. Although the Carter Administration was troubled by the abysmal human-rights record of El Salvador's rightist regime, it feared "another Nicaragua." So when in late 1980 a rebel victory appeared imminent unless the United States provided military and other forms of aid to the Salvadoran regime, Carter chose to assist the Salvadoran government, and thus hesitantly embarked on the policy that the Reagan Administration would later pursue with alacrity.

Not content to keep the radical left—made up of the FMLN and its allied political organizations—out of power, the

Carter Administration, as LeoGrande correctly emphasizes, firmly and consistently opposed any measures that would have afforded the radicals a significant political voice. This position in essence required a rebel defeat rather than a negotiated solution, since to have been meaningful, a political settlement would have had to entail some sort of power sharing between the FMLN and the regime.

So important did defeating the FMLN appear to be that the Carter Administration justified its military aid by announcing that the regime had made "progress" in the area of human rights, even though the Administration knew that in fact progress was nonexistent. In the year leading up to Carter's decision the Salvadoran armed forces and the right-wing death squads linked to them had killed more than 8,000 non-combatant civilians—among them four U.S. churchwomen.

THUS by the time Ronald Reagan was sworn in to office, the contours of U.S. policy had already been rigidly established. First, because of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry, preventing a rebel victory in El Salvador was regarded as a national-security priority (and the possible "loss" of El Salvador was seen as a catastrophe with enormous political consequences in the United States), which ultimately trumped concern over human rights. Second, "reform" in El Salvador was to be encouraged, but revolution was to be thwarted. And third, to make American aid to a homicidal regime more palatable, its human-rights progress would be greatly exaggerated. Despite the obfuscation engendered by the ensuing decade of bickering between Congress and the Administrations of Reagan and George Bush, and between Democrats and Republicans, this was the outline of what amounted to a bipartisan policy.

Although the Reagan Administration's fundamental policy toward El Salvador didn't differ substantively from its predecessor's, the new Administration did immediately escalate the rhetoric. The new Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, famously declared in the first weeks of the Reagan presidency that El Salvador was the "test case" of the Administration's foreign policy and that America would "draw the line" there against "Communist interference." Although

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this tough talk aroused considerable concern and criticism among liberals and the Democratic opposition, almost no one realized that the single most important and most terrible development in El Salvador's decade-long civil war had occurred before Reagan assumed the presidency and intensified American efforts to counter the FMLN.

By the time Reagan entered the Oval Office, on January 20, 1981, the guerrillas' "final offensive," launched at the beginning of the month, had failed, even though the Salvadoran regime and military were at their weakest and most divided. The rebels would never again come so close to seizing power. Although the FMLN had made important military gains in the countryside during the offensive, the success of its strategy rested on the ability of its affiliated "popular organizations"—coalitions of workers', peasants', and students' unions—to mobilize a simultaneous general strike in San Salvador, thereby crippling the country and forcing the military to spread itself too thin. But whereas the popular organizations had assembled hundreds of thousands of marchers in the capital just a year earlier, the general strike called to coincide with the final offensive failed to materialize, and thus the offensive petered out.

At the time, American officials publicly ascribed the failure of the offensive to the U.S.-sponsored land-reform program, initiated the previous March, which, they argued, had undercut the FMLN's popular support. As a Rand Corporation analyst, I spent two years assessing U.S. policy in El Salvador for the Defense Department. The U.S. military advisers and intelligence officers I came to know all understood that this explanation of the guerrillas' failure was nonsense. They knew that had land reform undermined popular support, it would have had its greatest impact in the countryside, but in fact the FMLN's major setback came in the city. It was not the result of reform but the consequence of the murder of thousands of people in the preceding months by the Salvadoran armed forces and the death squads. With lavish brutality the military failed to distinguish between dissenters and revolutionaries; many of its victims were unconnected to the FMLN, but enough were connected that the guerrillas' polit-



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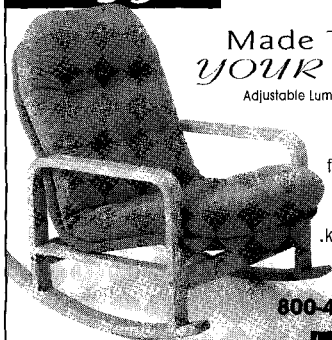
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ical infrastructure was destroyed. The guerrillas simply did not have enough allies left alive in San Salvador to organize a general strike.

In 1982 and 1983 the Salvadoran regime remained on the defensive, but the guerrillas continued to prove incapable of following up their increasing success on the battlefield with the necessary final blow—an insurrection in the capital. As I was told repeatedly by U.S. military and intelligence personnel who were as clear-eyed as they were aghast, the dirty little secret shared by those determined to prevent an FMLN takeover—a group that included both the Salvadoran armed forces and the United States government—was this: the death squads worked. To his great credit, LeoGrande recognizes and repeatedly emphasizes this crucial point.

As the American commitment to El Salvador deepened, the United States grew increasingly determined, for a mixture of altruistic and practical reasons, to put a stop to the carnage. Nevertheless, since the purpose of that commitment was to prevent an FMLN victory, there is no escaping the fact that the success of the U.S. policy was built on a foundation of corpses. A former U.S. military attaché to El Salvador recalled to me that in the middle of one of his many demarches to the Salvadoran high command on the need to stop death-squad killings, a high-ranking officer retorted in a dismissive tone that talk about respect for human rights was a luxury the United States could afford only because of the cold efficiency of the death squads in the early 1980s: "We cleaned up San Salvador for you." The attaché found the argument appalling—and correct.

But having noted the essential role of the death squads, LeoGrande fails to assess clearly and precisely the related issue of the differences—and, more important, the similarities—in the early 1980s between, on the one hand, congressional moderates and "pragmatists" within the Reagan Administration, who insisted that, somehow, defense of the Salvadoran regime be combined with efforts to reform it, and, on the other, the Administration's hard-liners. The latter thought that concerns about reform would only hinder the Salvadoran regime's efforts to defeat the guerrillas. LeoGrande evidently finds the position

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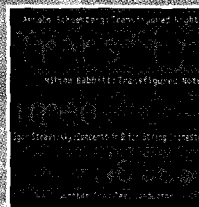
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of the hard-liners—a group that included Haig, Ambassador to the United Nations Jeane Kirkpatrick, National Security Advisor Richard V. Allen, and Undersecretary of Defense Fred Ikle—so distasteful that he fails to pay proper attention to their gruesome logic. In their public praise of the Salvadoran regime the hard-liners were unquestionably dishonest. Privately, however, most of them faced the implications of American policy quite honestly.

They had no illusions that the Salvadoran military was anything but “a bunch of murderous thugs”—as one of the hard-liners, a rigidly anti-Communist assistant secretary of defense, later told me. But they understood, as did America’s Salvadoran clients, that the United States had involved itself in El Salvador’s conflict not to ensure that the Salvadorans conducted their war cleanly but to serve what were seen by Democrats as well as Republicans as America’s national-security interests. Entertaining no hope of fundamentally altering a highly undemocratic and violent society, these policymakers believed that the most effective way of pursuing America’s security objectives in El Salvador was to let the Salvadoran armed forces run their war as they saw fit.

BY painstakingly laying out the lines of debate over El Salvador, LeoGrande’s chronicle shows that the Reagan Administration’s hard-liners were more clear-eyed than most of their Democratic critics. Democratic representatives and senators were deeply and publicly troubled by the flagrant lapses of America’s ally, as was the Carter Administration; nevertheless they would not countenance the triumph of Marxist guerrillas in El Salvador. This meant that although Democrats indignantly imposed conditions on American aid and threatened to withdraw support if those conditions weren’t met, their threats were ultimately meaningless, since they no less than Republicans recoiled from the likely consequence of cutting off aid. In addition to the apparent geopolitical risks of making good on their threats, the Democrats were unwilling to risk being charged with “losing” El Salvador.

The liberal representative Stephen Solarz, of New York, whom LeoGrande quotes, perfectly encapsulated the posi-

tion of most congressional opponents of the Reagan Administration’s policy: “We do not want to see a guerrilla victory,” he said, “but we do not want to see the United States provide assistance to a government whose security forces remain responsible for the abduction and torture of thousands of people.” Most of these opponents clung to the idea that a solution negotiated between the FMLN and the regime was the way out of the dilemma that Solarz defined, and they castigated the Administration (as does LeoGrande) for not aggressively pursuing one. But a negotiated settlement was practically unthinkable before the Cold War ended and before the two sides had bled each other white.

Throughout the 1980s (again, as LeoGrande’s chronicle, if not his assertions, makes clear) neither the guerrillas nor the Salvadoran regime showed any serious inclination to bargain. The FMLN was fighting to create a revolutionary state; the armed forces and the right wing, which wielded enormous influence in the regime, were fighting to prevent that. Both sides saw the war—and politics—as an all-or-nothing proposition, and both sides thought they could win. Just as important, Democratic advocates of negotiations held steadfastly to the same position as that of the Carter Administration (and the Reagan Administration): a “power-sharing” solution—which amounted to allowing the guerrillas to “shoot their way to power,” as the rhetoric had it—was unacceptable, since it would have entailed the real risk that the FMLN would eventually control El Salvador. But the FMLN repeatedly insisted that power sharing was one of its “fundamental goals” in a negotiated solution.

Essentially, the only principled positions in the debate over what to do in El Salvador were those held by a very few liberal Democrats—most notably Representative Gerry Studds, of Massachusetts—who wished to cut off aid to the Salvadoran regime despite their conviction that such a measure would probably lead to an FMLN victory, and by the hard-line Republicans who unflinchingly acknowledged the monstrous character of America’s client but took the position that the geopolitical stakes demanded that America work with the devil.

For nearly the first three years of Reagan’s presidency U.S. policy, as Leo-

Grande minutely traces it, clumsily combined the emphases of pragmatists and hard-liners, as the two groups jostled for influence within the Administration and as the Administration responded to pressure from its congressional critics. Thus the CIA spent \$2 million to ensure that Roberto D’Aubuisson—a death-squad leader, the head of the far-right ARENA party, and a man who had been described by Carter’s ambassador to El Salvador as a “pathological killer”—would not win the 1982 election for provisional President, even as it turned a blind eye to the sources and extent of death-squad violence, believing that, as an intelligence officer said, “the less you know, the better.” (Later, when the moderate position prevailed and the CIA did focus on the death squads, it conclusively declared that “extreme rightwing terrorism” was “an integral part of the government of El Salvador.”)

Significantly, just as in 1980 the Salvadoran armed forces and the death squads linked to them did the dirty work for the United States, forestalling a rebel victory, so, too, by the end of 1985 the death squads had eliminated another 30,000 “subversives,” thus removing any threat of an urban insurrection for the next four years and giving the United States the luxury of implementing the complex strategy for which the moderates had been pressing.

This strategy eventually won the consensus of the American political class, Democrats and Republicans, because it promised to allow the United States to pursue its security interests while working to make El Salvador a better place. It was patterned after an earlier American effort to defeat another Marxist insurgency by supporting and reforming another seamy regime—the government of South Vietnam. Remarkably, this fact gave pause to very few, but the limitations and frustrations that America encountered in pursuing its strategy in El Salvador would prove decidedly similar to those it encountered in Vietnam.

The new strategy just as steadfastly pursued the hard-liners’ goal of preventing an FMLN victory. But, as championed by its advocates—Reagan’s new Secretary of State, George Shultz; Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs Thomas Enders; Enders’s chief deputy for Central America,

L. Craig Johnstone, a veteran of the pacification program in South Vietnam; Deane Hinton, the ambassador to El Salvador; Hinton's successor, Thomas Pickering; and the U.S. military-advisory group in El Salvador—this plan would seek to tutor, nudge, and pressure the Salvadoran regime to conduct what one of the strategy's earliest advocates, James Cheek, Johnstone's predecessor under Carter, termed "a clean counterinsurgency war," a goal that some of the strategy's critics on the left and the right charged was oxymoronic.

This new strategy viewed the insurgency as rooted in legitimate grievances and assumed that it could ultimately be defeated only if those grievances were redressed through fundamental reforms. With the triumph of this viewpoint in policymaking circles, the American project in El Salvador really began. This project left practically no aspect of Salvadoran public life untouched by the United States. Even the U.S. military defined its ends in the broadest possible terms: according to a joint Army and Air Force report, America's goal in "low-intensity conflicts" like El Salvador's was to do no less than build "viable political, economic, military and social institutions that respond to the needs of society." American military advisers and intelligence officers in El Salvador would now be joined by a stream of American lawyers and judges and former police officers, by agricultural and manufacturing consultants, by union officials and social psychologists, by experts on legislative and electoral procedure—all determined to remake the country.

THE most extensive and enduring expression of this approach was the report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, commonly known as the Kissinger Commission report, which was issued in January of 1984. Although the report argued unequivocally that Cuba and the Soviet Union were behind the crisis, which posed a serious threat to U.S. security interests, it nevertheless emphasized the political and economic roots of El Salvador's civil war and advocated a strategy that relied on political, social, and economic development to defeat the FMLN. The report stressed, for instance,

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the need to continue the land-reform effort that the Carter Administration had prodded the Salvadoran regime to undertake in 1980. (The heart of this program was entirely a U.S. creation; the law enacting it was the only piece of legislation in the history of El Salvador that had to be translated into Spanish.)

Issued less than a month after Vice President George Bush's mission to El Salvador seeking to compel the government and the armed forces to restrain the death squads (the most dramatic expression of the triumph of the pragmatists' strategy, and the first of what would be more than half a dozen similar visits by high-level U.S. officials and politicians over the next six years), the Kissinger report explicitly linked countering the insurgency to attaining political legitimacy, which in turn dictated an end to human-rights abuses. Thus the commission argued that no contradiction existed between the security interests of

the commission recommended that increased military aid

be made contingent upon the Salvadoran government's demonstrated progress toward free elections; freedom of association; the establishment of the rule of law and an effective judicial system; and the termination of the so-called death squads, as well as vigorous action against those guilty of crimes and the prosecution to the extent possible of past offenders.

Significantly, however, in an endnote that reflected the ultimate motivation behind the reformist strategy that the report advocated, Kissinger himself, along with two other members of the commission, declared, in effect, that since the survival of the Salvadoran regime was crucial to American security, the United States could not allow human-rights abuse to stand in the way of its support of El Salvador. Nevertheless, the counterinsurgency strategy the report

ogy produced by centuries of abuse perpetrated by the very armed forces and governing elite that its policy supported. In El Salvador the United States found that to foster a just and liberal society it had to rely on a recalcitrant military with a murderous past and a government with no democratic traditions. America's only means of persuading that government and those armed forces to help themselves by helping the Salvadoran people was conditionality.

FOR the next six years policymakers and the congressional supporters and critics of the U.S. role in El Salvador measured the success of that role in terms of the degree to which the objectives enunciated in the report were attained. Until the end of the Cold War, an event that fundamentally altered both the premises and the limitations of America's strategy in El Salvador, the debate in the United States amounted to whether

the glass was half full or half empty. The optimists pointed out that from 1982 to 1990 El Salvador held six reasonably free elections, thanks to U.S. guidance and millions in U.S. support (the United States spent \$17 million on the 1982 and 1984 elections alone). They noted, furthermore, that beginning in 1984 political murders committed by the armed forces and the death squads declined precipitously; this was thanks mainly to U.S. pressure but also to the fact that so many targets had already been eliminated. (To the end the American engagement in El Salvador indisputably forced the United States to associate with thugs, but at the same time that association undeniably mitigated their thuggery.

Neither the severest critics nor the most strenuous proponents of U.S. policy fully acknowledged both sides of this coin.)

Pessimists noted that by 1989 El Salvador had absorbed perhaps \$6 billion in open and covert American assistance, but U.S. Agency for International Development workers were still frustrated by



a great power and the generous motives of a democracy; indeed, the two were connected. The mechanism by which the two interests were apparently to be linked was "conditionality." In a key passage of the report explaining specifically the goals of the American counterinsurgency strategy in El Salvador,

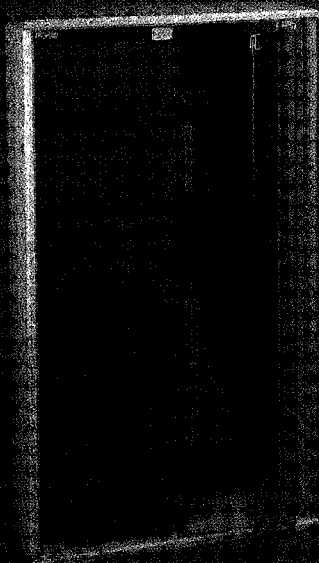
defined, which the United States would pursue in El Salvador until the end of its involvement in the conflict, assumed that American pressure, advice, and assistance could achieve profound political change. The United States thus took on a most daunting task. It assumed responsibility for ameliorating the pathol-

the fact that the U.S.-sponsored land-reform program had ground to a halt; U.S. military advisers were dismayed that the Salvadoran military remained corrupt, tactically incompetent, and brutal; U.S. Justice Department officials found it unbelievable that despite their advice and \$15 million in technical assistance, the Salvadoran regime had failed to convict a single military officer in a situation in which up to 40,000 political murders had been attributed to the military and the death squads affiliated with it; and State Department officials declared in exasperation that El Salvador could not "qualify . . . as an institutional democracy capable of insuring respect for the human and civil rights of all its citizens."

By and large, the pessimists had a stronger case. On the eve of the collapse of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry, most American military experts—including every U.S. military adviser I knew—believed that the war would continue indefinitely, and U.S. diplomats spoke off the record of an American reform project that would perforce last generations. The Salvadoran regime remained remarkably immune to American blandishments.

These limitations on the American project were obvious in the selection of two Salvadoran Defense Ministers—Carlos Eugenio Vides Casanova in 1983, and René Emilio Ponce in 1990. The United States exerted considerable pressure on the Salvadoran military to select these two, whom U.S. officials touted as moderates—as indeed both were, compared with their alternatives. But as commander of the National Guard in the early 1980s, Vides had acquiesced in the cover-up of the Guard's murder of four American churchwomen, and he was assumed to have been complicit in other political murders carried out by the Guard and death squads linked to it. For his part, Ponce had been the de facto commander of the Treasury Police—the unit of the Salvadoran armed forces most notorious for its sadistic and extravagant crushing of dissent—from 1979 to 1982, the height of the period of political violence in El Salvador. Thus Ponce did not have a reputation as a particularly enlightened officer, and was in fact denied a U.S. visa for years because he was suspected of human-rights violations. (Later, as army chief of staff, Ponce was one of the officers who

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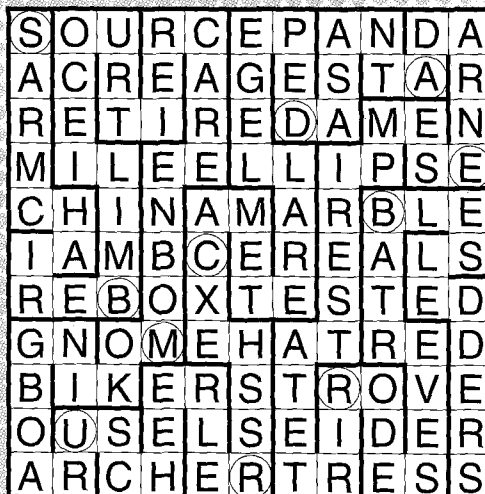
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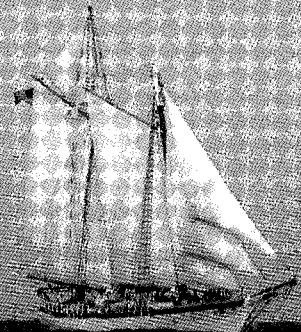
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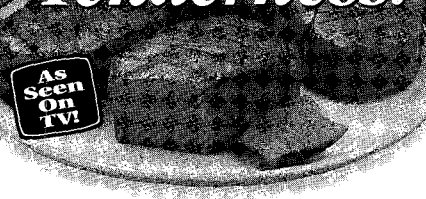
almost certainly ordered the murders of six Jesuit priests in 1989.) U.S. officials found that both Vides and Ponce were a good deal more pliant than the "extremists" in the Salvadoran officer corps, but obviously neither really shared their American benefactors' vision for El Salvador.

The causes of the frustration that the United States encountered aren't difficult to fathom. American policymakers failed to realize that the leverage that the United States can exert over the conduct of a regime, even if that regime's very survival would appear to depend on American material assistance, is easily overestimated. As policymakers should have learned from the case of South Vietnam, such leverage decreases dramatically when those whom the United States is attempting to influence perceive America to be constrained by its own national interests. After all, how could the Salvadoran military take seriously Washington's threats to cease aid when the United States repeatedly made clear its determination to prevent a rebel victory? Unless America was able to convince the Salvadoran regime and armed forces that it was willing to take drastic steps apparently antithetical to America's interests, the U.S. nation-building strategy could not have succeeded.

IN November of 1989 the FMLN launched its most dramatic offensive in years—the so-called Battle of San Salvador. It was during this attack that the Salvadoran military murdered the six Jesuit priests, who had been strenuous advocates of reform. The frustration that American policymakers in Washington and officials in El Salvador had been experiencing over the previous six years boiled over. That the FMLN had been able to infiltrate the capital with more than a thousand fighters and launch such a powerful assault belied all optimism regarding progress in the seemingly interminable conflict and in the tactical improvement of the Salvadoran military. More important, the Jesuits' murder and the Salvadoran military's subsequent cover-up and obstruction of justice seemed to show that the armed forces' apparent progress under American tutelage in respecting human rights and adhering to the rule of civilian political institutions was illusory.

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But many shocked officials at the State Department, following the fighting in San Salvador, failed to pay proper attention to the far more significant events occurring simultaneously in East Germany. The Cold War, quite suddenly, was ending, and just as suddenly everything changed for the United States in El Salvador.

In its unwavering support of the Salvadoran regime, the United States succeeded for a decade in denying the guerrillas a victory. By 1990, though the ambitious goals of America's nation-building effort were never realized, the security concerns that had impelled that strategy evaporated along with the East-West contest. To Washington, "winning" in El Salvador no longer mattered. A negotiated solution, or even "losing," no longer carried the ominous significance that it had for the Carter and Reagan Administrations.

Washington's leverage over its client vastly increased as soon as the Salvadoran armed forces and regime recognized that the United States no longer had pressing reasons to continue supporting them. Thus the threat to cut off aid at last brought a measure of justice in the case of the Jesuits' murder. And more important, with the American embassy in San Salvador, policymakers in Washington, and Democratic and Republican legislators on Capitol Hill all eager to liquidate a burdensome and noxious commitment, America was finally able to force the Salvadoran military and rightist elements of the regime to make concessions that weakened their position in the Salvadoran polity.

This provided the necessary precondition for the contestants in El Salvador to settle their differences, because it permitted the guerrillas to stop fighting without fear that rightist forces would destroy them as soon as they laid down their arms. Neither side, however, would have sought an agreement had not each been compelled to recognize that it was never going to gain the victory for which it had long fought, especially now that the Sandinistas' electoral defeat meant that the FMLN had lost the material and ideological support of its main ally, and the United States was no longer interested in bolstering the Salvadoran military. And so the contestants scurried to make the best deal they could.

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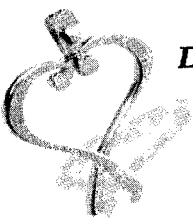
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This was a fairly sordid ending to what was—despite some men of good will on both sides of the Salvadoran conflict, such as Alfredo Cristiani, El Salvador's President, and Guillermo Ungo, the president of the Revolutionary Democratic Front—a squalid and brutal contest. Having involved itself in this struggle, there was no way the United States could emerge from it without exceedingly dirty hands.

For all the honesty of his chronicle, LeoGrande at times wishes, understandably, to assign a too easy blame for America's conduct in El Salvador—a posture that his own painstaking account will not support. To blame, as he occasionally does, "Reaganites" for an "ideological certainty" and "Manichean" outlook that exaggerated the perceived national interest in the outcome of El Salvador's civil war is facile. Democrats and Republicans were united to the end on the essential question concerning that country: both were adamant, for domestic political as well as apparent strategic reasons, that El Salvador should not fall to the FMLN. Most

American liberals were, after all, *Cold War* liberals, and thus very few were able or willing to say forthrightly that a guerrilla victory would not jeopardize American interests.

An American reading *Our Own Backyard*, knowing that this chapter of our history is over, feels liberated, because despite the nostalgia of our foreign-policy mandarins for what they call an "overarching" foreign policy "vision" like global containment, it's a relief to live in a world in which a reflexive bipartisan foreign-policy doctrine—or, if you prefer, a realistic bipartisan recognition of the Soviet threat—no longer demands that America intervene in conflicts like El Salvador's. Now that America is free to pursue a more discriminating foreign policy, perhaps the most important lesson of our involvement in El Salvador's civil war is that internal conflicts are particularly brutish struggles, and that choosing sides in them almost invariably entails means unsettling to us for ends that future chroniclers, at least, will deem unworthy of the costs. ☛

BRIEF REVIEWS



Master Georgie

by Beryl Bainbridge.
Carroll & Graf, 190 pages,
\$21.00.

The reader of Ms. Bainbridge's obliquely angled novel never directly meets Master Georgie—amateur photographer, physician, head of a well-heeled and respectable Liverpool family in the mid nineteenth century. He is described by three people. The adoring Myrtle is a waif taken in by Georgie's parents and gradually incorporated into the family. Dr. Potter is his brother-in-law, a man who seemingly has never been self-supporting in all his scholarly life. Then there is "the duck-boy," a

tough street urchin who grows up to be a tough small-circus performer. They all wind up in the Crimea, because Georgie has taken the war seriously. The novel creates, with conviction, a small segment of Victorian society in which surface propriety conceals some distinctly improper arrangements. Whether she is describing the morbidly comic or the dubiously experimental or the savagely bloody, Ms. Bainbridge writes with cool detachment in a prose as clear as gin. Her use of historical detail is subtle and surprising and functions brilliantly. This is a memorable novel, in part because the reader is left worrying the unanswered question—Who was Georgie really?

The Undiscovered Chekhov

by Anton Chekhov,
translated by Peter Constantine.
Seven Stories, 224 pages,
\$24.00.

The thirty-eight pieces in this collection are very early work, published in the 1880s, when the young author was studying medicine and supporting feckless relatives. They are not the equal of the great later work, but their popularity at the time is entirely understandable. They were, and still are, frequently amusing, novel in construction (Chekhov had approached invention of the O. Henry trick ending), irreverent in subject matter, provocative by implication, and full of vitality. Chekhov made his satirical points by ricochet, but they were sharp. Mr. Constantine deserves much gratitude for retrieving this neglected material.

A Werewolf Problem in Central Russia and Other Stories

by Victor Pelevin,
translated by Andrew Bromfield.
New Directions, 224 pages,
\$23.95.

Reading Mr. Pelevin's short stories in tandem with early Chekhov produces a sense of déjà vu. The modern Russian author is an adroit inventor of absurd satirical fantasies, but his targets are those of Chekhov—inefficiency, arrogant petty authorities, ignorance, drunkenness, and general incompetence. Mr. Pelevin adds government gobbledegook to the list (the Czar's government did not supply that in any quantity) and omits sexual follies. It seems that the twentieth century has made less impression on Russia than one might expect.

The Last Dinosaur Book

by W.J.T. Mitchell.
Chicago, 321 pages, \$35.00.

The author is a professor of language and literature with an interest in iconography. He considers the dinosaur a cultural icon and proposes to describe its "life and times." He sees it as representing a variety of notions, often contradictory. As a detector and analyst of iconic

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In 1894, Theodor Herzl, an Austrian Jewish journalist, was assigned to cover the Dreyfus trial in France. Seeing this Jewish officer being railroaded to a life sentence led him to the recognition that life for Jews in Europe was untenable and that the solution of the "Jewish problem" lay in the establishment of a Jewish state.

What are the facts?

The Birth of a Dream. The return to Zion had for 2,000 years been the dream of Europe's dispersed Jews. "Next year in Jerusalem" had always been the watchword. But nothing was done to bring this dream to reality. Theodor Herzl organized the first Zionist Congress in Basel (Switzerland) in 1897 and political Zionism was born.

The concept of creating a new nation in what was then a sparsely-settled country was something never before attempted in the history of mankind. But Herzl's vision fired up world Jewry and especially the Jews of eastern Europe, who were despairing under the yoke of Russian oppression. Energized by Zionist aspirations, British Foreign Secretary Lord Balfour issued his famous Declaration in 1917, by which Palestine was established

as a national home for the Jewish people. In 1922, the League of Nations entrusted Britain

with the Mandate for Palestine. Regrettably, Britain decided that the requirements for setting up a Jewish national home would not apply east of the Jordan River. That area constituted three-fourths of the territory of the Mandate. Only one-quarter of Palestine remained to fulfill the Jewish dream.

A Nation is Born and Succeeds. The modern state of Israel was founded in May 1948—fifty years after Herzl formulated the concept. Immediately the country was invaded by five Arab armies. With a total Jewish population of only about 650,000, and with limited armaments and resources, the ragtag army of Israel defeated the combined might of the aggressors and established itself firmly within its boundaries. Jordan stayed in possession of Judea/Samaria (now

known as the "West Bank") and the eastern part of Jerusalem. Egypt occupied the Gaza Strip. The price was very high. In this bloodiest of wars imposed on Israel, over 6,000 citizen-soldiers died—over 1% of the population. In the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel once again prevailed; it repossessed Judea/Samaria, the eastern part of Jerusalem, and conquered the vast Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights. And once more, in 1973, the Arabs tried to destroy Israel in the Yom Kippur War. Once more, they suffered defeat.

Despite being under constant attack and siege and having suffered over 20,000 dead in those defensive wars, Israel created social and political systems and an economy that continues to amaze experts worldwide. Israel is the only truly democratic country in the entire Middle East,

"One would think that emerging nations would wish to learn from Israel's example. But the opposite is the case."

with governmental structure and institutions comparable to those of the United States.

Its economy—despite the enormous defense expenditures mandated by the aggressiveness of its neighbors and despite the effort and expense of having absorbed more than 2.5 million immigrants (four times the population at the creation of the state)—can only be described as a miracle of human accomplishment. Virtually the entire infrastructure had to be built from a minimal base. Today, Israel's economy is booming. It is a leader in high-tech technology; it has created one of the most advanced agricultural systems in the world; it is one of world leaders in economic growth rate; it has one of the highest per-capita incomes in the world; and it is the world leader in exports per capita.

We have in this century seen the demise of many "isms", the most prominent failures being those of Communism and Nazism. But Zionism has flourished to an extent that the visionary Theodor Herzl could not have possibly imagined 100 years ago. One would think that the emerging nations would wish to learn from Israel's example. But the opposite is the case. Goaded by the Arab nations, inalterably hostile to Israel, the United Nations has offered more than 100 resolutions condemning Israel's actions.

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symbolism, Professor Mitchell is formidably ingenious. He does not consider the possibility that widespread interest in dinosaurs may be merely a manifestation of that meddlesome curiosity (It's new—let's investigate) that has carried *Homo sapiens sapiens* from mudholes to the moon. One need not share the author's views in order to enjoy his book. The man is amusing to argue against.

**Dinosaur Impressions:
Postcards From a
Paleontologist**

by Philippe Taquet,
translated by Kevin Padian.
Cambridge, 244 pages,
\$24.95.

Mr. Taquet is a distinguished French paleontologist who has hunted dinosaur bones from Morocco to the Gobi, with side trips to Laos and South America and visits to everywhere else. His book consists of accounts of what he found in various places, reports of what others have found, geological explanations, adventures along the way, and historical anecdotes. When Andrew Carnegie presented a model of his dinosaur to France, a celebratory gathering of scientists and dignitaries expected a speech from the President of the Republic. President Armand Fallières had probably never given a thought to dinosaurs in his life; confronted with the huge skeleton, he could say only "*Quelle queue! Quelle queue!*"—and "tail" has the same connotations in French as in English. Mr. Taquet's book is charmingly written, generous with credit to fellow scientists, terse in describing mean climates and bad roads, and eloquent in conveying the excitement and growing delight the author felt when "a few bony fragments" emerged as "the whole right side of the skull of a superb *Protoceratops*." Enormously informative about dinosaurs, and a real pleasure to read.

The Haunted Tea-Cosy

by Edward Gorey.
Harcourt Brace, 64 pages,
\$15.00.

Mr. Gorey could, no doubt, conjure perversely sinister chuckles from an antimacassar, but a tea-cosy serves just as well. No Gorey admirer should overlook this "Diversion for Christmas."

**Harvest Son:
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by David Mas Masumoto.
Norton, 302 pages,
\$22.95.

Mr. Masumoto's previous memoir concentrated on his peach orchard. This one covers, in a deceptively casual style, the history and present condition of a Japanese farming community in California, where Asian immigrants have suffered injustice and abuse. The author did not himself experience either the early days of landless field work or the wartime confinement in what amounted to prison camps. He has heard about those days, however, and reports them with no overt rancor. He is equally gentle in describing the decay of Japanese cohesion and tradition in his town, which he regrets but sees no way to combat. It is farming that excites Mr. Masumoto. He can keep the reader in sharp suspense over rain on the raisin harvest. He grows almost lyrical on the merits of the farm dump—the repository of what may come in handy some day and, given farmers' ingenuity, often does. His humor is understated but pervasive. He is a remarkable writer with a field, and a sensibility, peculiarly his own.

Field of Thirteen

by Dick Francis.
Putnam's, 287 pages,
\$24.95.

It takes space to set up a horse theft or a racing scam, and to do it in short stories, Mr. Francis has had to reduce the solid background detail and tart social perceptions that distinguish his novels. The thefts and scams are, however, admirable; a couple are so enticingly plausible that the author appends advice to his introductory notes: "Don't do it!"

—Phoebe-Lou Adams

Recent books by Atlantic authors:

God: Stories edited by C. Michael Curtis. Houghton Mifflin, 416 pages, \$30.00/\$14.00. A number of the stories in this collection first appeared in *The Atlantic Monthly*, and Curtis is one of the magazine's senior editors.

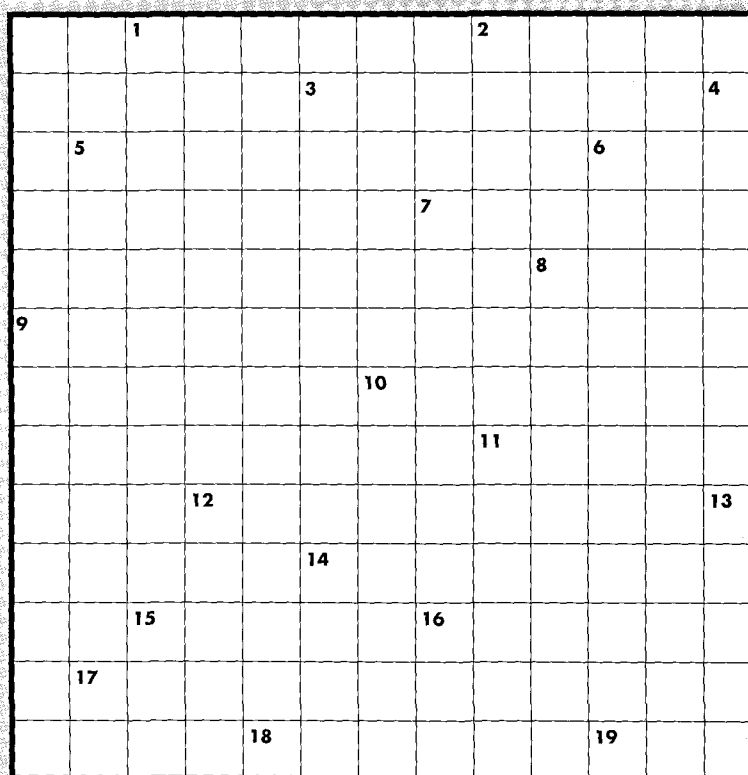


THE PUZZLER

by Emily Cox and Henry Rathvon

Criss-Crossing

In this puzzle, clues are given for pairs of intersecting entries; each pair's clue number identifies its crossing point in the diagram. Either member of the pair may be clued first. In addition to the clue answers, there are four connected pairs of unclued intersecting entries left for solvers to discover. It may help to know that starting and ending bars, if they were shown, would form a pattern that would be the same when rotated 180 degrees. Clue answers include four capitalized words.



The solution to last month's Puzzler appears on page 113.

Clues

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>1. Main crossing element in construction (4)
Before boy returns, glance at tabloid story (7)</p> <p>2. Lax agent taking cut (6)
Fine fabric left with expert (4)</p> <p>3. Points of entry or exit ultimately held by allies (7)
Make adjustments to skimpy top, removing a bit on the front (5)</p> <p>4. Enclosure behind a small tree (5)
Silver and gold on a shield found next to a market area (5)</p> <p>5. Opposing fuel drums (6)
Venerated one, a wise old man, catching cold (8)</p> <p>6. Cost of living like pops (5)
Expel a punk carrying old battle weapon (7)</p> | <p>7. Old estate sent back iron in case (4)
Whirling dervish shortened initially long contract (7)</p> <p>8. Pair in secondary-level competition (5)
Week ends in fights about papers (7)</p> <p>9. Eliminated fuzzy surfaces from the right fabric (7)
Green part attached to the back of plastic case (8)</p> <p>10. Stole made swishing sounds (7)
False praise involving Spanish article probed (4,3)</p> <p>11. Confused me, a pig, and a bird (6)
Confident in attitude about mom traveling with military specialist (8)</p> <p>12. Arab woman in between terminals (5)
Society concerned with activity of ghosts (7)</p> <p>13. Laurel left Oregon university (6)</p> | <p>Foreshadow finale in back of harbor (7)</p> <p>14. Hunted doe cuts free (7)
Excess length in suture material (4)</p> <p>15. Think about aluminum having the properties of some stones (7)
Somewhat interested, if you'll enlighten (5)</p> <p>16. Put up only about one-fifty (5)
Journey by road and flying machine (8)</p> <p>17. Something funny about Idaho tobacco case (7)
Nothing included in back pay for the use of cleansing agent (5)</p> <p>18. Audited spinner of yarns and string (4)
Planned to marry again, pursuing bachelor (6)</p> <p>19. Worry a retiring doctor's attendant (7)
Incomplete look at a Middle Eastern city (4)</p> |
|---|---|--|

Note: The instructions above are for this month's puzzle only. It is assumed that you know how to decipher clues. For a complete introduction to clue-solving, send an addressed, stamped long envelope to The Atlantic Puzzler, 77 North Washington Street, Boston, Mass. 02114.

WORD WATCH

by Anne H. Soukhanov

explornography *noun*, a consuming fascination with famous and, especially, dangerous explorations—for example, Richard Byrd's expeditions to Antarctica—that may include a desire to retrace such trips in person: "We had been seduced by an odd modern phenomenon, the glorification of exploration at a time when the entire planet has been mapped. The Age of Exploration has been succeeded by the Age of Explornography" (*New York Times Magazine*).

BACKGROUND: Soft-core *explornographers* are content to experience super-dangerous *adventure travel* vicariously, a thrill easily had through books and films. Hard-core *explornographers*—a group whose number has been rising sharply in recent years—spend vast sums on gear, guides, training, and whatever else is needed to undertake such expeditions themselves. These *explornographers* are, typically, outdoorsy amateurs, many of whom live and work in urban settings. A good proportion are women, and the average age of hard-core *explornographers* of both sexes is about fifty.

land-based bookstore *noun*, a bookstore set up to serve customers who visit physical premises, as opposed to an online bookseller. Also called

A selection of terms that have newly been coined, that have recently acquired new currency, or that have taken on new meanings, compiled by the executive editor of The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition.

physical bookstore. "The rapid growth [of online bookstores] has given rise to a whole new lexicon to describe the evolving literary trade—traditional 'land-based' bookstores versus a new wave of digital bookstores" (*New York Times*).

BACKGROUND: The modifier *land-based* is an example of retronymy—the qualification of a term that once had a single, well-established meaning but now must be distinguished from variants arising, in many cases, from technological advances or changing lifestyles. Thus we must specify *snail mail*—letters—as opposed to *E-mail*; *hard copy* as opposed to copy transmitted by computer or fax; *birth parent* as opposed to *adoptive parent*; and *ocean surfing* as opposed to *channel* or *Internet surfing*.

muscle candy *noun, slang*, a dietary supplement used by athletes to increase their energy and strength. Also called *performance enhancer*, *sports supplement*. "Teenage jocks are copying their heroes and sucking down protein potions, cre-

atine cocktails and a laundry list of other over-the-counter *muscle candies*" (*Denver Post*).

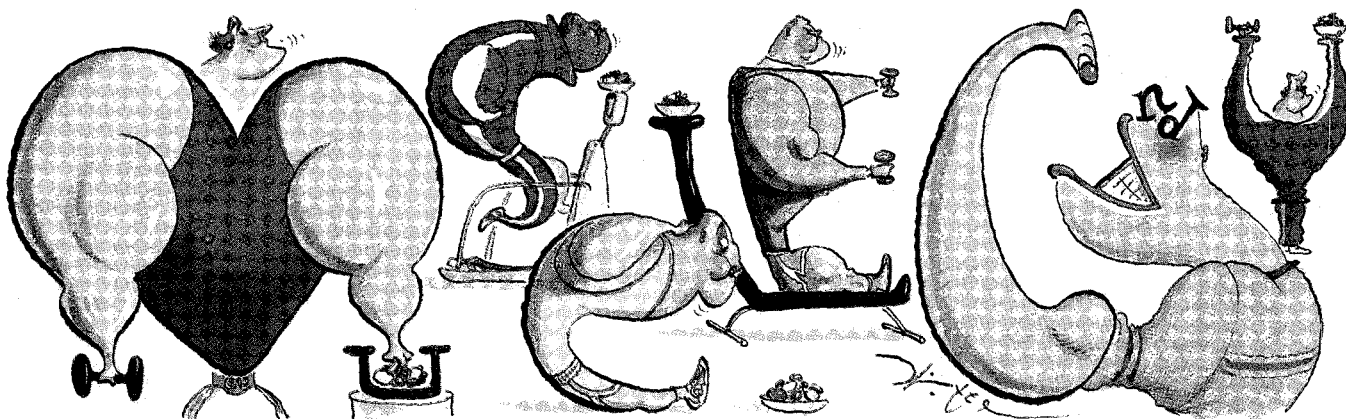
BACKGROUND: Probably the most popular *muscle candy* on the current sports scene is creatine, a synthetic version of a compound that occurs naturally in the liver and kidneys and stores the high-energy phosphate needed for muscle contractions. Athletes who use creatine consider it a legal alternative to steroids; like steroids, it increases muscle mass, though the extent to which it can do so is a matter of debate. Other *muscle candies* include whey protein, which is said to increase the body's production of nitrogen and insulin—substances important to muscle growth—and vanadyl sulfate, which mimics insulin's effects. The long-term consequences of taking creatine and other *muscle candies* are unknown, and their use, especially by teenagers, is consequently controversial. The term joins a small but growing cluster of other euphemistic *candies*: *nose candy* (cocaine), seen as long ago as 1925; *ear candy* (a piece of light music), from at least 1984 and discussed in this

space in 1987; *eye candy* (an especially beautiful person), seen in 1984 in advertising lingo; and *arm candy* (a date of either sex who has been chosen for his or her attractiveness), from at least 1992.

reinforced clothing

noun, relatively lightweight, inconspicuously armored attire designed to be worn by private citizens as protection against armed attack. Also called *bullet-proof clothing*, *protective clothing*. "The reinforced-clothing boom, which has created a multi-million-dollar business as part of a growing security industry [in Colombia], is not just an urban phenomenon" (*Washington Post*).

BACKGROUND: *Reinforced clothing* has become a craze in Colombia, where the homicide rate is several times that in the United States. It includes items for everyday wear, such as suits and raincoats, and also formal garments, such as tuxedos and ball gowns, and comes in varying degrees of ballistic resistance. The term recalls two other counterterrorism terms that rely on euphemism and carry overtones of domesticity, both of which were discussed in this space in May of 1988: *appliqué armor*, used to protect vehicles, and *bomb blanket*, used by bomb-disposal squads to contain explosions.





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